

PARTA**Board of Trustees Meeting via Zoom****May 28, 2020 @ 7 p.m.****Agenda**

1. Call to Order
Roll Call Oral
2. Meeting Minutes
Minutes from February 27, 2020, Meeting (Motion Required) Attachment 2a
3. Guest Communications (Due to COVID-19, not required) Oral
4. General Manager's Report Attachment 4
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Administration Scheduled Zoom Meeting 5/28/2020
 - b. Finance Scheduled Zoom Meeting 5/26/2020
 - c. Operations Did Not Meet
 - d. Personnel Did Not Meet
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Resolutions - Roll Call Approval Required

#2020-05-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PURCHASE UP TO FIVE (5) LIGHT TRANSIT VEHICLES (LTVs) OF WIDE BODY CONSTRUCTION, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS FROM TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).

#2020-05-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA), AN OPERATING ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED BY 49 U.S.C. CHAPTER 53, TITLE 23, UNITED STATES CODE, AND OTHER FEDERAL STATUTES ADMINISTERED BY THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA).

#2020-05-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) FOR FY 2021 TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE GRANTS. THESE GRANTS MAY INCLUDE THE OHIO ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSIT FARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, THE URBAN TRANSIT PROGRAM, AND THE OHIO TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

#2020-05-04: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO AMEND THE PROCUREMENT POLICY, SPECIFICALLY THE POLICY REGARDING CREDIT CARD USE.

9. Executive Session (if needed) – Roll Call Approval Required
10. Adjournment

Next Regular Meeting:

June 25, 2020 @ 7 p.m.

***PARTA* Administration Building
2000 Summit Road
Kent, Ohio 44240**

PARTA
PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES

PARTA ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
2000 SUMMIT ROAD
KENT, OHIO 44240

February 27, 2020

Board Members Present:

Rick Bissler, President	Brian Gray	Mike Lewis
Marge Bjerregaard	David Gynn, Vice President	Jeremy Moldvay, TPO
Jeff Childers	Virginia Harris	Morgan Tipton
Debbie Davison	Timothy Lassar (arrived at 7:15)	Karen Wise

Board Members Not Present:

Richard Brockett (2 nd excused absence)	Frank Vitale (3 rd excused absence)
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Staff Present:

Claudia Amrhein	Kelly Jurisch	Rebecca Schrader
Denise Baba	William Nome, Legal Counsel	Brian Trautman
Marcia Fletcher	Clayton Popik	

Guests Present:

None.

CALL TO ORDER

President Rick Bissler welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. An oral roll call followed, and a **quorum was present**.

Moving on, Mr. Bissler said the meeting minutes for the January 23, 2020, Board meeting were distributed, and he entertained a motion to accept. Mr. Mike Lewis made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard seconded the motion. **Motion to approve the minutes, as presented, passed unanimously.**

GUEST COMMUNICATIONS

None.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Bissler asked Ms. Claudia Amrhein to comment on the General Manager's report.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Mr. Bissler and the Board for coming out on this blustery winter night. She said there will be a presentation tonight on PARTA's role in the 2020 Census and generally what Portage County is doing and why all that is very important, as well as some highlights of plans to mark PARTA's 45th Anniversary this year. Nothing large and party-wise but there will be some

messaging and getting the word out about the importance of *PARTA*'s services for the community. Last month, Ms. Morgan Tipton asked about the Easy Street rollout, so she included a little bit in her Board report but Mr. Brian Trautman is here if there are any specific questions. A few people have gone through the process now.

Mr. Trautman said there is one lady right now who is pushing back very hard. She is a retired emergency room nurse who wants a guarantee that Easy Street is not going to sell her personal information to anybody. He guaranteed her that would not happen.

Ms. Amrhein asked if there were any other questions. Hearing none, she said she also provided a very brief overview in her Board report about some of the priorities that are being worked on this year as short-term projects and goals. Added to this list will be carrying out the Connecting Communities grant, if awarded, which will occur in May.

Mr. Bissler thanked Ms. Amrhein and said the Administration Committee met tonight. He asked Ms. Karen Wise to give an overview.

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Ms. Wise said the committee talked about two (2) things mostly. The first was the proposed revisions to the Procurement Policy, specifically credit card usage. Ms. Amrhein explained it, presented it, and the committee made a motion to amend the policy, which will be presented to the Board in March. The second was Resolution 2020-02-01, which was discussed. The committee made a motion to present it at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, he said the Finance Committee met on Tuesday and he asked Mr. Dave Gynn to provide a report.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Gynn said the Finance Committee did meet on Tuesday and had an exciting meeting reviewing everything from last year. Not all Board members could attend this meeting, but hopefully more will attend the next one. Even though it was only a day ago, there's a seven (7) page single spaced copy of the minutes provided. He then gave a couple highlights from last year. He said income was slightly higher than expenses, which is a good thing. Sales tax was up, which is a major source of funding. A little more than half of revenue comes from sales tax. Expenses and wages were at 91% of the budget, which is very good. The gross operating surplus (income over expenses) was \$857,000. That sounds like a lot of money but on an almost \$10 million budget, it's not that much. That's about one (1) months' worth of operations. The committee reviewed the capital report, grant funding, and local projects. For Kent Central Gateway (KCG), the gross operating surplus was \$55,777, which is a nice surplus. With that, Ms. Rebecca Schrader transferred money from KCG to *PARTA* to repay the loan for the ticketing equipment that was needed for the parking deck. He noted that the average revenue per car entering the deck was \$4.94 and the average expense per car was \$4.77. There is not a lot of difference but considering there were 115,000 cars, that adds up. He concluded by saying Ms. Schrader could answer any specific questions.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions for Mr. Gynn. Hearing none, he thanked Mr. Gynn and moved on to New Business.

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee did not meet.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT

This committee did not meet.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Bissler asked Ms. Amrhein to present the Census Overview under New Business.

Ms. Amrhein said the census is this year and the official Census Day is April 1. There's a large scale effort to get the word out about the importance of being counted in the census and Portage County is one of a number of Complete Count Committees that have been established across Ohio and the country to make sure that key leaders within the community and organizations step up and engage their constituencies with the information about how important it is to be counted and that it is a safe process. The census will determine the number of seats in the House of Representatives, out of 435, that will represent the State of Ohio. Losing or gaining seats trickles down into funding that is received for essential programs such as transit and other services. She has been a part of the Complete Count Committee, along with Ms. Baba, who will present a short video. Ms. Baba will be engaging more directly now and will be carrying out the message for PARTA.

The video reported that every 10 years the census records everyone living in this country. It's written in the Constitution. And comes in a questionnaire that counts everyone who lives at your address on April 1. The data can be used to inform funding for services like fire stations, schools, clinics, and representation that affect your community. How will 2020 Census data be used? Where there are more people, there are more needs for public services. That's why the census is used by the government to inform funding decisions each year. But that's not all. It's also used by nonprofits to inform services by businesses to create jobs and even by students for school projects. Understanding how the population changes, helps us shape communities across the country for the better. How does the 2020 Census affect representation? There are 435 seats in the House of Representatives. These get distributed to the 50 states by population, and an accurate census response helps your state get the right number of seats. States with smaller populations get at least one. While states with larger populations might get more. How do I take the 2020 Census? In March 2020, every address in the country will receive an invitation to complete a simple questionnaire and there are three (3) ways to respond. Number 1: Do it online. Number 2: Call by phone. Number 3: Send it by mail. For those who don't respond, a census taker from your community will follow up and assist you. Is my 2020 Census data safe? After sending your census response, your personal information is kept safe. By law, it can't be shared with any other government agency, law enforcement, or landlord. No one. So, take your 2020 Census with peace of mind. Shape your future. Start here. Visit 2020census.gov.

After the video concluded, Ms. Amrhein said a few weeks ago, the census contacted PARTA about having a table at KCG to recruit census workers. PARTA agreed if they didn't recruit employees. They are doing this at different transit centers to try to get enough workers. She then asked Ms. Baba to say a few more words about putting it on the website or any other plans.

Ms. Baba said she distributed the employee newsletter, which includes some information about the census. The point of the Complete Count Committee is that it's everybody's responsibility to make sure not only that they are counted individually, but that they talk it up with their neighbors and people who are skeptical because each person counted means additional dollars for the state of Ohio. It's important that every man, woman, and child in Portage County gets counted because that will affect the billions of dollars that are distributed from the federal government, specifically

what comes to Portage County. Portage County gets federal tax dollars through grants so it's important that everyone is counted. The video mentioned that it's safe. It is very safe and it's very secure. Nobody is going to come to someone's house and drag them out. They're not going to get a hold of banking information. The purpose of the census is to enumerate how many people there are in the United States. Some of the things that PARTA is doing as part of the Complete Count Committee is helping spread that word.

Mr. Timothy Lissan arrived at the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Ms. Baba continued by saying information will be put on PARTA's website and she will get information out as well when she is out in the community. She said one of the keys to the Complete Count Committee is it's staffed by people who are well known in the community. Hopefully that will create a sense of security among people and let them know that if this person is on the committee and is promoting the census, the census can be trusted because they're a person who is trusted. She encouraged everyone, if they're trusted in their community, to mention it casually in conversation and make folks aware of the census and how truly important it is not only to the nation but more specifically right here in Portage County to every person who lives here.

Ms. Amrhein thanked Ms. Baba and said Ms. Baba will now provide a brief overview of PARTA's 45-year milestone.

Ms. Baba said this year is PARTA's 45th Anniversary. The back of the employee newsletter has a little bit of historical information about PARTA. Some information about the history will be included every month. It's important to let employees know about PARTA's history as well as anybody who will pick up the newsletter or read it in the lobby. In addition, a spot will appear on WKSU sometime this year to promote that PARTA has been around for 45 years. Additionally, the timeline on the Board room wall will be updated to reflect 45 years. Also, in the lobby there is a blank wall, which will be used to commemorate the 45th Anniversary. The concept right now is to do a collage but instead of just focusing on buses, the focus will be on the people who use PARTA: the elderly, the disabled, the regular worker. In addition, some information will appear on the website. There is currently a video on the website of a woman whose name is Elizabeth. She's 100 years old. It is branded under Ohio Loves Transit, which was celebrated about a week ago, but it will be rebranded for the 45th Anniversary. Additional videos will be added from ordinary people who use PARTA's services. She then played the video of Elizabeth.

The video showed Elizabeth talking about how her eyes went bad when she was in her early 80s and she had to give up driving. She said she was 100 years old on July 7 and is aiming to be 101. She must depend on somebody else to take her places and do things for her. She doesn't always have somebody to do that. When asked how her first ride was with PARTA, she said the driver was very good, very nice. The driver came and got her. She asked Elizabeth if she could walk up the steps and Elizabeth said she didn't want to take a chance. The driver said she would leave the ramp down for her then. Elizabeth said the driver took her up on the ramp and let her down. She was very nice.

At the conclusion of the video, Ms. Baba noted that the entire video was shot on an iPhone and was edited in house by Travel Trainer Carlell Howard. She said Elizabeth came in because she needed to sign up for the elderly and disabled fare and have her picture taken. She met Elizabeth in the lobby and talked to her. She got Mr. Howard to shoot the video and follow her on the bus for some additional shots. That's the concept that will be used for other videos, perhaps somebody going to work or going shopping or going to a medical appointment. Going with them on their trip provides an opportunity to talk to them about how they use PARTA, how important it is in their life, and show how PARTA impacts Portage County. Those videos will run on the web site. The iPhone will be fine for the videos, but the quality will be worked on a little more. That's what is planned to let the community know that PARTA has been around for 45 years and hopes to be around for another 45, 145, 245 years.

Mr. Bissler thanked Ms. Baba and said he drove for Mr. Joe Fiala the year before he started PARTA. He asked Board members to thank Mr. Fiala for forming PARTA as an RTA as they walk by his picture tonight. He said when he first went on the Board, they went to a training session and there were all kinds of different transit operations represented at that conference and there are lots of ways to do transit. In the recent past, Lorain County was run out of the county commissioners. At some point, they just decided they didn't want to fund it anymore and they parked the buses. PARTA is very, very fortunate that it is an RTA.

Resolution

Mr. Bissler then moved on to Resolution #2020-02-01.

#2020-02-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH KENT STATE UNIVERSITY (KSU) AND THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO, TO CONTINUE JOINT EFFORTS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EAST MAIN STREET GENERALLY LOCATED FROM WILLOW STREET TO HORNING ROAD.

Mr. Bissler entertained a motion.

Motion: Debbie Davison

Second: Brian Gray

Ms. Amrhein said this is a cooperative agreement between the City of Kent, Kent State University (KSU), and PARTA. The three (3) groups have already been working together to plan changes for East Main Street. The City and KSU will be mostly impacted. They have agreed to split the local match cost of the funding that's required. They invited PARTA to join in this agreement to ensure that PARTA is at the table for any discussions about transit amenities or pedestrian safety. PARTA is already at the table but this formalizes it and brings to the attention of both KSU trustees and the City of Kent Council that the three (3) entities pledge to work together to produce the best, safest thoroughfare along East Main Street through the road improvements and as KSU works to improve their facilities on front campus. There is also a Citizens Advisory Committee supported by the City of Kent and KSU that has been meeting for a couple of years now to hear residents' ideas and input during the planning stages. She has been at those meetings, along with Mr. Popik and Mr. Trautman. PARTA applied for the Connecting Communities grant, which was submitted yesterday. Hopefully, if PARTA gets that grant, it will be able to do that study from Horning Road east to 261 which will then create plans in funding mechanisms for the improvement of those areas. Again, PARTA is not obligated to provide funding by contract but what is in the agreement is that PARTA will apply transit enhancement or improvement funds that are available if it helps to improve facilities along that corridor.

Mr. Bissler asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, a roll call vote was taken.

Roll Call:	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Frank Vitale	<u>EXCUSED</u>		Richard Brockett	<u>EXCUSED</u>	
David Gynn	<u>X</u>		Brian Gray	<u>X</u>	
Virginia Harris	<u>X</u>		Jeremy Moldvay	<u>X</u>	
Marge Bjerregaard	<u>X</u>		Morgan Tipton	<u>X</u>	
Michael Lewis	<u>X</u>		Jeff Childers	<u>X</u>	
Karen Wise	<u>X</u>		Debbie Davison	<u>X</u>	
Timothy Lassan	<u>X</u>		Rick Bissler	<u>X</u>	

Moving on, Mr. Bissler said March 1 is Sunday. It's a big day in his book because there is still snow in March, but it will only last a day or two so that means winter is on its way out. He thanked everyone for coming out tonight and said he just checked the satellite weather and it seems as though the snow has passed. He asked everyone to be safe traveling home.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bissler concluded by entertaining a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Mike Lewis made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Marge Bjerregaard seconded the motion. **Motion to adjourn passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.


Respectfully submitted,



Marcia Fletcher
Executive Assistant

PARTA
2000 Summit Road
Kent, Ohio 44240

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: PARTA Board of Trustees 
FROM: Claudia B. Amrhein, General Manager
DATE: May 2020

Virtual Meetings Begin in May. As we enter week 11 of the Coronavirus pandemic, public board and committee meetings will resume in May via the online platform, "Zoom." The cancellation of meetings in March and April enabled PARTA team members to navigate the unprecedented circumstances of rapid closure of K-12 schools and university campuses, banning of group gatherings, and the quick shuttering of non-essential services and businesses beginning March 23 with Ohio's Stay at Home order.

Throughout this crisis, public transit continues running as a component of our nation's critical transportation infrastructure. Like our sister transit authorities, PARTA kept transit services running at various, reduced levels since March 13 while doing everything within our power to protect the health and safety of our employees and community members. We thank our board of trustees for your trust during this long period of stress and uncertainty.

Committee Meetings and Resolutions. The May meeting agenda includes four (4) resolutions. **The board of trustees will meet remotely via Zoom on Thursday, May 28 at 7:00 p.m.**

The finance committee will meet remotely via Zoom on Tuesday, May 26 at 11:30 a.m. to review recent financial reports and Resolution #2020-05-01 to award a five-year contract to TESCO for the purchase of light transit vehicles.

The administration committee will meet remotely via Zoom on Thursday, May 28 at 6:30 p.m. to review Resolutions #2020-05-02, #2020-05-03, and #2020-05-04 to authorize grant application submissions to ODOT and FTA in fiscal year 2021 and to adopt the procurement policy reviewed and revised following the February meeting.

#2020-05-01: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PURCHASE UP TO FIVE (5) LIGHT TRANSIT VEHICLES (LTVs) OF WIDE BODY CONSTRUCTION, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS FROM TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).

Awarding Contract for Purchase of Light Transit Vehicles. Resolution #2020-05-01 awards a five-year contract to TESCO for the production and purchase of light transit vehicles. PARTA issued RFP#LTV2020-1 on February 18, 2020, reviewed proposals received in response to this formal procurement, and identified TESCO as the vendor offering the best overall product and price for PARTA. The resolution authorizes the purchase of up to five (5) light transit vehicles (LTVs), optional equipment and spare parts from TESCO in 2020 for a cost not to exceed \$470,000. The new vehicles will replace small buses running beyond their useful life that are programmed for replacement in the current Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

#2020-05-02: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA), AN OPERATING ADMINISTRATION OF

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED BY 49 U.S.C. CHAPTER 53, TITLE 23, UNITED STATES CODE, AND OTHER FEDERAL STATUTES ADMINISTERED BY THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA).

#2020-05-03: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (**PARTA**) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) FOR FY 2021 TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE GRANTS. THESE GRANTS MAY INCLUDE THE OHIO ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSIT FARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, THE URBAN TRANSIT PROGRAM, AND THE OHIO TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

Annual Federal and State Grant Award Resolutions. *Resolutions #2020-05-02 and #2020-05-03* are template resolutions required annually by FTA and ODOT to authorize the filing of applications for federal and state transportation assistance grant funding each fiscal year. The grant dollars we receive through these funding sources support the day-to-day delivery of transit services.

#2020-05-04: A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (**PARTA**) BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO AMEND THE PROCUREMENT POLICY, SPECIFICALLY THE POLICY REGARDING CREDIT CARD USE.

Adoption of Revised Procurement Policy. In February, the administration committee reviewed and recommended adoption of revisions to the Procurement Policy. The updated policy is included in this board packet. The cancellation of meetings in March and April delayed bringing the policy forward for board adoption as requested in *Resolution #2020-05-04*.

New Vehicle Storage Building Nearing Completion. While nearly every normal activity experiencing some degree of suspension beginning in March, the construction of our new vehicle storage building continued relatively uninterrupted. Enclosed in this board packet please find photos of the facility. Renovating the wash bay to be CNG-compliant is slightly behind schedule, but ultimately remains on target for completion this summer.

Service Reports. Ridership. Total county fixed route and DART ridership decreased by 28.46% through April, as compared to April 2019, with 106,579 county trips completed through April as compared to 148,984 trips performed through April 2019. Overall ridership, including campus service, decreased by 36.10%, with campus down by 39.76%. Total system ridership totaled 290,615 as compared to 454,788 through April 2019.

On-Time Compliance. *ADA Complementary Paratransit Service.* ADA on-time compliance was 96.13% in April as compared to 90.39% in March. Of 336 trips, 13 were performed late, with the latest trip running 13 minutes behind. ***General Public (non-ADA) DART.*** On-time performance for general public, non-ADA trips improved to 87.38% in April, as compared to 79.62% in March.

Vehicle Preventative Maintenance (PM). On-time compliance with established PM inspection schedules was 100% in April as compared to 97% in March.

Parking. Parking deck usage plummeted in March and April due to COVID-19 closures. Just over 5,000 cars parked in the deck during March, averaging 164 cars per day. This represents a 47% decrease as compared to February and a 48% decrease as compared to March 2019. In April, just 785 cars utilized the deck, averaging 26 cars per day. This represents a decrease of 85% as compared to March, and a 93% decrease as compared to April 2019.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. If you have any questions prior to the board meeting, please feel free to contact me by calling (330) 676-6315, or by e-mail at Amrhein.c16@partaonline.org.

VEHICLE STORAGE BUILDING 2019-2020







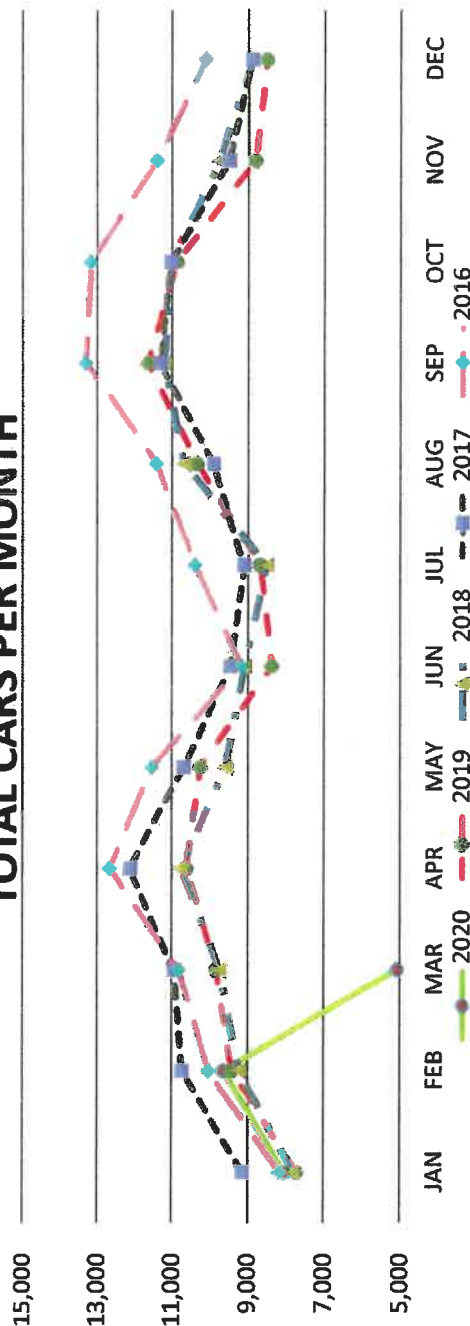


KENT CENTRAL GATEWAY PARKING SUMMARY April 2020

6 Month Lookback

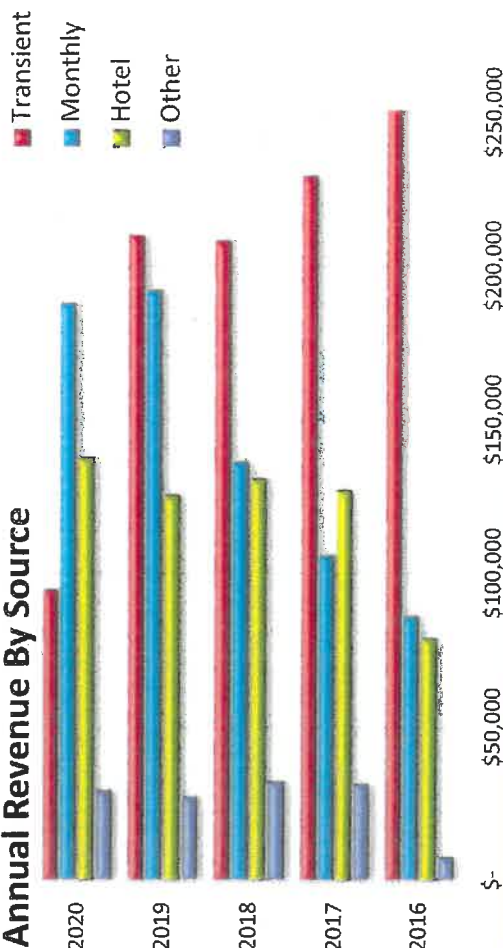
	Monthly	Transient	Illegal	Total	Cars/Day	Last	Last Year
Nov-19	3,857	4,955	-	8,812	294	-19%	-10%
Dec-19	3,410	5,095	-	8,505	274	-3%	-4%
Jan-20	4,297	3,727	-	8,024	259	-6%	4%
Feb-20	4,512	5,130	-	9,642	332	20%	2%
Mar-20	2,929	2,153	-	5,082	164	-47%	-48%
Apr-20	708	77	-	785	26	-85%	-93%

TOTAL CARS PER MONTH

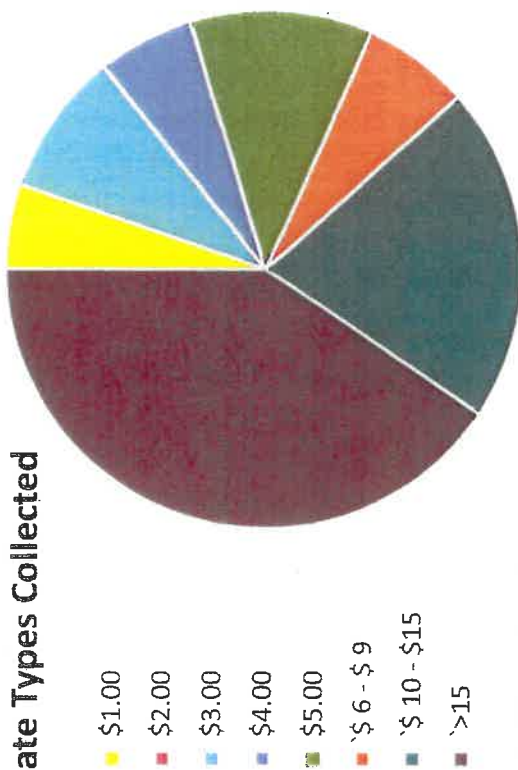


	2020	2019	2018
JAN	8,024	7,707	7,790
FEB	9,642	9,424	9,236
MAR	5,082	9,836	9,753
APR	785	10,639	10,775
MAY		10,268	9,592
JUN		8,371	9,098
JUL		8,672	8,510
AUG		10,352	10,702
SEP		11,657	11,197
OCT		10,888	11,039
NOV		8,812	9,759
DEC		8,505	8,886
YTD	23,533	115,131	118,373
TOTAL	-37.4%	-1.0%	

Annual Revenue By Source



Rate Types Collected



RESOLUTION #2020-05-01

A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL MANAGER, OR HER DESIGNEE, TO PURCHASE UP TO FIVE (5) LIGHT TRANSIT VEHICLES (LTVs) OF WIDE BODY CONSTRUCTION, OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT AND SPARE PARTS FROM TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT SALES CORPORATION (TESCO).

WHEREAS, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) has identified the need to purchase replacement Light Transit Vehicles (LTVs) of wide body construction for LTVs that are beyond their useful life and are included in the AMATS approved Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); and

WHEREAS, PARTA conducted a formal procurement through RFP#LTV2020-1, which was issued on February 18, 2020, and after reviewing the RFPs, found that Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation (TESCO) LTVs represent the best overall product and price for PARTA; and

WHEREAS, PARTA will use funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Flex Funds transferred from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), and local sales tax revenue to cover the cost of the vehicles during the contract period; and

WHEREAS, funding from the FTA will be through the 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funding program and the Ohio Transit Preservation Partnership Program (OTPPP) grant award program; and

WHEREAS, PARTA will utilize local sales tax revenue as local match and to supplement the grant funding in the event unexpected contingent expenses arise; and

WHEREAS, PARTA plans to order LTVs, optional equipment and spare parts from TESCO, in accordance with PARTA's TIP, each year beginning in 2020 through 2025 depending on the availability of funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED by the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) Board of Trustees that:

The General Manager, or her designee, is hereby authorized to execute said contract with Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation (TESCO) beginning in 2020 through 2025 and to authorize the initial order for five (5) LTVs, optional equipment and spare parts, for a cost not to exceed \$470,000.

CERTIFICATION:

The undersigned duly qualified Board President, acting on behalf of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA), certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Board of Trustees held on May 28, 2020.

Date

Rick Bissler, President
Board of Trustees

Attested

RESOLUTION #2020-05-02

A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS WITH THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA), AN OPERATING ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, FOR FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE AUTHORIZED BY 49 U.S.C. CHAPTER 53, TITLE 23, UNITED STATES CODE, AND OTHER FEDERAL STATUTES ADMINISTERED BY THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA).

WHEREAS, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has been delegated authority to award federal financial assistance for a transportation project; and

WHEREAS, the grant or cooperative agreement for federal financial assistance will impose certain obligations upon the applicant and may require the applicant to provide the local share of the project cost; and

WHEREAS, the applicant has or will provide all annual certification and assurances to the FTA required for the project; and

WHEREAS, the applicant is the Designated Recipient as defined by 49 U.S.C. §5307 (A)(2).

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED by the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) Board of Trustees that:

1. The General Manager, or her designee, is authorized to execute and file an application for federal assistance on behalf of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for federal assistance authorized by 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, Title 23, United States Code, or other federal statutes authorizing a project administered by the FTA.
2. The General Manager, or her designee, is authorized to execute and file with its application the annual certification and assurances and other documents the FTA requires before awarding a federal assistance grant or cooperative agreement.
3. The General Manager, or her designee, is authorized to execute grant and cooperative agreements with the FTA on behalf of PARTA.

CERTIFICATION:

The undersigned duly qualified Board President, acting on behalf of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA), certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Board of Trustees held on May 28, 2020.

Date

Rick Bissler, President
Board of Trustees

Attested

RESOLUTION #2020-05-03

A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (PARTA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS WITH THE OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) FOR FY 2021 TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE GRANTS. THESE GRANTS MAY INCLUDE THE OHIO ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSIT FARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, THE URBAN TRANSIT PROGRAM, AND THE OHIO TRANSIT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, the State of Ohio, through its FY 2021 programs, has made available funds to assist public transportation systems in Ohio; and

WHEREAS, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) is the transit operator for Portage County; and

WHEREAS, PARTA is presently providing transit service and observing all federal and state rules regarding these programs.

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED by the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) Board of Trustees that:

1. The General Manager, or her designee, is hereby authorized to file an application and execute contracts for the FY 2021 Ohio Elderly and Disabled Transit Fare Assistance Program, the FY 2021 Urban Transit Program, and the FY 2021 Ohio Transit Partnership Program on behalf of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA).
2. The General Manager, or her designee, is authorized to furnish such additional information as the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) may require in connection with these applications.

CERTIFICATION:

The undersigned duly qualified Board President, acting on behalf of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA), certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Board of Trustees on May 28, 2020.

Date

Rick Bissler, President
Board of Trustees

Attested

RESOLUTION #2020-05-04**A RESOLUTION BY THE PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (*PARTA*) BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO AMEND THE PROCUREMENT POLICY, SPECIFICALLY THE POLICY REGARDING CREDIT CARD USE.**

WHEREAS, the Procurement Policy identifies the laws that form the basis of *PARTA*'s procurement policy and procedures; designates persons responsible for the duties under those laws; establishes the ethical standards that participants in the process are expected to maintain; sets forth the manner in which protests to procurement decisions may be made; and sets forth the credit card use policy; and

WHEREAS, the Procurement Policy is updated from time-to-time to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal regulations governing Regional Transit Authorities; and

WHEREAS, the Ohio Auditor of State Bulletin 2018-003 issued November 30, 2018, advised all political subdivisions that hold credit card accounts, except colleges and universities and counties, to adopt a written policy for the use of credit card accounts; and

WHEREAS, *PARTA* has established internal controls and procedures to monitor and track credit card usage by authorized employees; and

WHEREAS, it is *PARTA*'s desire to amend the Procurement Policy, specifically the policy regarding credit card use, to formally establish Board policy as outlined in the Custody and Control Model established in the Ohio Auditor of State Bulletin 2018-003 by revising Section 7 entitled Credit Card Use.

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED by the Board of Trustees of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (*PARTA*) that:

1. The Procurement Policy, as revised and attached, be accepted and adopted by the Board of Trustees effective May 28, 2020.

CERTIFICATION:

The undersigned duly qualified Board President, acting on behalf of the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (*PARTA*), certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted at a legally convened meeting of the Board of Trustees held on May 28, 2020.

Date

Rick Bissler, President
Board of Trustees

Attested



PROCUREMENT POLICY

**Amended 12/3/98, 8/25/05, 12/20/07,
5/27/10 (section 6.3), 9/22/2011,
03/23/2017 (section 7)
4/15/2019
3/26/2020 (section 7)**

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PORTAGE AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

PROCUREMENT POLICY

1.0 Purpose/Scope

It is PARTA's policy to be good stewards of local, state, and federal monies entrusted to it by the public. This policy establishes the goals of the Board of Trustees as they pertain to procurement of goods and services and use of credit cards, when necessary, to carry out the operations of PARTA. This policy identifies the laws that form the basis of PARTA's procurement policy and procedures; designates persons responsible for the duties under those laws; establishes the ethical standards that participants in the process are expected to maintain; and sets forth the manner in which protests to procurement decisions may be made.

2.0 Legal Authority

- 2.1** PARTA shall follow the procurement procedures for Regional Transit Authorities as put forth in the Ohio Revised Code and the FTA Circular on Third Party Contracting (Currently 4220.1F).
- 2.2** In the event Ohio state law is less restrictive or not as limiting as federal procurement standards, the procurement requirements put forth by the FTA Circular shall be followed. The above citations are attached hereto and made part of this policy.

3.0 General

- 3.1** The following guidelines shall establish how all procurement funds of PARTA will be expended as directed by the Board of Trustees and General Manager.
- 3.2** These guidelines apply to the procurement of any and all supplies, materials, equipment, and services. The references cited and included in this policy are provided to give additional guidance in PARTA's procurement function, as this policy, in and of itself, is not all inclusive.

4.0 Delegation of Authority

Authority to carry out the procurement functions is allocated between the Board of Trustees and General Manager as follows:

4.1 Board of Trustees

- 4.1.1 Approve Procurement Policy.
- 4.1.2 Approve Credit Card Use Policy.
- 4.1.3 Award contracts whose cost is \$100,000 or more.

4.2 General Manager/Secretary Treasurer

- 4.2.1 Establish and update, as needed, procurement procedures, internal controls, and credit card use procedures consistent with federal and state laws deemed necessary to carry out this policy.
- 4.2.2 Approve and Execute contracts over \$100,000 that have been awarded by the Board of Trustees.
- 4.2.3 Approve and execute change orders for contracts over \$100,000 that are within the dollar amount awarded by the Board.
- 4.2.4 Award and execute contracts under \$100,000.
- 4.2.5 Approve and execute change orders to contracts under \$100,000 so long as the total contract amount does not exceed \$100,000.

5.0 Ethical Conduct

- 5.1 No employee of PARTA or trustee or agent shall participate in the solicitation or in the award or administration of a contract awarded by PARTA , if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, exists.

- 5.1.1 Such conflict exists when any of the following has a financial or other interest in the firm or organization selected for the award:
 - 5.1.1.1 the employee, trustee, or agent
 - 5.1.1.2 any member of their immediate family
 - 5.1.1.3 any business partner, or
 - 5.1.1.4 an organization that employs or is about to employ any of the above.

- 5.2** No employee of PARTA or trustee or agent shall solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors, potential contractors or parties to sub-agreements.
- 5.3** Business lunches or dinners of minimal value are excluded from this section.
- 5.4** Annually, all trustees and agents shall be solicited regarding certification of conflict of interest.
- 5.5** Violation of Section 5.0 Ethical Conduct shall result in discipline of employee, trustee, or agent involved, up to and including discharge from employment, or termination of consulting services.

6.0 Protests

- 6.1** It is the policy of PARTA to prepare specifications for invitations to bid or for requests for proposals that are not discriminatory in nature. All solicitations are to be open and free to all competing vendors whereby all have a reasonable chance to be successful and be awarded a contract.
- 6.2** If a vendor feels that a particular solicitation is unfair for whatever reason, the following procedure must be followed to register a proper protest, and said procedure shall be a part of all solicitations:

Step 1: The protest must be made in writing and addressed to the Secretary Treasurer no later than three (3) days before the scheduled bid opening or RFP due date.

Such protest must cite what the solicitation was for and for what reason the protest is lodged.

Step 2: The Secretary Treasurer shall make all reasonable attempts to resolve the protest prior to the award of a contract and may reschedule the bid opening solely at their discretion if deemed necessary. The Secretary Treasurer must make a decision no later than 10 working days from the date the protest was filed.

Step 3: If the protest is not satisfactorily resolved at Step 2, the person or firm making the protest may request a hearing with their legal counsel and PARTA, with PARTA's legal counsel serving as arbitrator on the matter. Request for such a hearing must be made within 15 working days of the original date the protest was filed.

Step 4: If the protest is not satisfactorily resolved at Step 3, the person or firm making the protest may appeal, within 30 working days of the original protest date, the matter to the Board of Trustees of PARTA , who shall assign the matter to the appropriate standing committee of the Board who shall hold a hearing within 15 working days on the matter and make recommendations to the full Board to be considered at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

The decision of the Board shall be final and binding on all parties.

Further appeal would be via courts of competent jurisdiction.

6.3 If a vendor feels that a particular award is unfair for whatever reason, the following procedure must be followed to register a proper protest, and said procedure shall be a part of all solicitations:

Step 1: The protest must be made in writing and addressed to the Secretary Treasurer no later than three (3) days after the protested action of PARTA becomes known or reasonably should have been known by the protesting party.

Such protest must cite what the solicitation was for and for what reason the protest is lodged.

Step 2: The Secretary Treasurer shall make all reasonable attempts to resolve the protest prior to the award of a contract and may reschedule the bid opening solely at their discretion if deemed necessary. The

Secretary Treasurer must make a decision no later than 10 working days from the date the protest was filed.

Step 3: If the protest is not satisfactorily resolved at Step 2, the person or firm making the protest may request a hearing with their legal counsel and PARTA, with PARTA's legal counsel serving as arbitrator on the matter. Request for such a hearing must be made within 15 working days of the original date the protest was filed.

Step 4: If the protest is not satisfactorily resolved at Step 3, the person or firm making the protest may appeal, within 30 working days of the original protest date, the matter to the Board of Trustees of PARTA, who shall assign the matter to the appropriate standing committee of the Board who shall hold a hearing within 15 working days on the matter and make recommendations to the full Board to be considered at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

The decision of the Board shall be final and binding on all parties.

An adversely affected party may also submit a complaint in writing directly to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of 3rd Party Contracting. The FTA will only consider whether the local procedure was followed.

7.0 Credit Card Use

7.1 It is the policy of PARTA to authorize use of credit cards for the efficient acquisition of goods or services, solely for the benefit of PARTA's business operations.

7.2 Cash withdrawals, purchases with cash back, and purchases for personal use are strictly prohibited, including purchases of entertainment or alcoholic beverages. Debit card accounts not related to the receipt of grant moneys are strictly prohibited.

- 7.3** Credit cards may be used for expenses incurred while conducting approved business on behalf of PARTA, as defined in PARTA's Personnel Policy Manuals (Exempt, Nonexempt, and Student), Section 3.11, Business Expenses.
- 7.4** The General Manager shall authorize credit card accounts and designate persons authorized to use credit cards.
- 7.5** PARTA utilizes the custody and control system for credit card issuance. The General Manager (or in the absence of the General Manager, the Chief of Staff) and the Director of Finance maintain physical control over all credit cards and oversee a "sign out" system by persons authorized to use credit cards. Credit cards are stored in a locked safe with access limited to the Director of Finance, Grants & Procurement Manager, General Manager, and Executive Assistant.
- 7.6** The maximum credit limit for the credit card account is \$15,000.
- 7.7** The General Manager shall establish and update, as needed, a system of internal controls and procedures deemed necessary to carry out this policy. Internal controls and procedures so established shall be designed to deter credit card misuse, provide adequate tracking of credit card use, and create and preserve an appropriate audit trail. The Director of Finance will review and approve each account statement and reconciliation every month. Annually, the Director of Finance shall provide a report to the General Manager which details all awards received from PARTA's credit card usage to facilitate providing such report annually to the Board of Trustees.
- 7.8** Persons authorized to use credit cards shall return itemized receipts for all transactions into the Accounting Department within two (2) business days. Itemized receipts shall be attached to monthly billing statements.
- 7.9** Persons authorized to use credit cards who cannot produce an itemized receipt shall submit a written explanation as substitution for the lost or missing receipt, which shall be subject to approval by the General Manager.

- 7.10** In the event a credit card is lost or stolen, persons authorized to use credit cards shall immediately notify their department head and Director of Finance. The Director of Finance shall immediately notify the bank of issuance and General Manager.
- 7.11** Persons authorized to use credit cards shall sign a statement indicating he/she has read the credit card policy and procedures, understands them, and agrees to abide by them.
- 7.12** The use of a credit card account for expenses beyond those authorized via board policy constitutes misuse of a credit card account. Utilization of *PARTA's* credit cards for any purpose other than official business shall be promptly investigated and may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, termination.

8.0 Attachments

- 8.1** ORC Section 306.43
- 8.2** ORC Sections 9 and 153
- 8.3** FTA Circular 4220.1F
- 8.4** Buy America Regulations, 49 CFR 661
- 8.5** Auditor of State Bulletin 2016-004
- 8.6** Auditor of State Bulletin 2018-003



Dave Yost • Auditor of State

Bulletin 2018-003

Auditor of State Bulletin

DATE ISSUED: November 30, 2018

TO: All Political Subdivisions
All Independent Public Accountants

FROM: Dave Yost, Auditor of State

SUBJECT: House Bill 312 Amendments to Regulate the Usage of Credit and Debit Cards

Background

House Bill 312 amends Ohio Revised Code sections 505.64, 511.234, 940.11, 940.12, 1545.072, 1711.131, 2913.21, 3313.291, and 3375.392 and enacts sections 9.21, 9.22, 717.13, 3313.311, 3314.52, 3326.52, 3328.52, and 6119.60 of the Revised Code to regulate the use of credit and debit cards. The credit card requirements apply to all political subdivisions, except colleges and universities and counties. The debit card requirements apply to all political subdivisions, except law enforcement.

Written Policy Requirements

House Bill 312 establishes two separate internal control models for credit card usage by political subdivisions: the custody and control model and the compliance officer model. The bulletin describes these models below.

Not later than February 2, 2019, the legislative authority of a political subdivision that holds a credit card account must adopt a written policy for the use of credit card accounts. Otherwise, a legislative authority must adopt a written policy before the use of a card account. The policy must include provisions addressing all the following:

- The appointment of a compliance officer, where applicable;
- The officers or positions authorized to use a credit card account;
- The types of expenses for which a credit card account may be used;

- The procedures for acquisition, use, and management of a credit card account and presentation instruments related to the account including cards and checks;
- The procedure for submitting itemized receipts to the fiscal officer or the fiscal officer's designee;
- The procedure for credit card issuance, credit card reissuance, credit card cancellation and the process for reporting lost or stolen credit cards;
- The political subdivision's credit card account's maximum credit limit or limits; and
- The actions or omissions by an officer or employee that qualify as misuse of a credit card account.

These policy points are a minimum. Policies should be tailored to the specific needs of your entity.

Definitions

"Political subdivision" means a body corporate and politic that is responsible for government activities in a geographic area smaller than that of the state. ***Counties are excluded under Ohio Rev. Code §9.21 pertaining to credit card accounts, but are included under Ohio Rev. Code §9.22 pertaining to debit cards.***

"Credit card account" means any bank issued credit card account, store issued credit card account, financial institution-issued credit card account, financial depository-issued credit card account, or any other card or credit account allowing the holder to purchase goods or services on credit or to transact with the account, and any debit or gift card account related to the receipt of grant moneys.

We interpret credit card accounts to include online purchasing accounts (e.g., Amazon Business which include the ability for local governments to set internal controls over employee spending) and store gift cards (not related to the receipt of grant monies). Store gift cards are credit cards which are preloaded with a set dollar amount and may be used only at a specific retailer.

"Credit card account" does not include the following:

- Procurement card account – a card issued to designated users by a political subdivision to make purchases at selected businesses. Procurement cards can be tied to either a credit card or bank account. Security measures for procurement cards include setting per-purchase and per-month dollar limits. Procurement cards may also feature spending restrictions for the types of purchases allowed and merchant category codes which define where purchases can and cannot be made. ***A bank that manages a procurement card will issue payments to payees within days, while providing monthly invoicing to the local government.*** The appropriate local government supervisor or fiscal staff must review and approve these invoices prior to payment. This differs from a credit card

because use can be limited to specific businesses and dollar amounts. These accounts generate merchant invoices to local governments.

- Gasoline card – card utilized strictly for fuel and automotive parts or repairs purchases.
- Telephone credit card account – account utilized to enable users to make long distance phone calls.
- Any other card account, similar to a gasoline or telephone card, where a merchant category code limiting the type of good that may be purchased is in place as a system of control for use of the card account.

“Presentation instruments” means any card, check, or account number which can be used to purchase goods or services, including online purchasing accounts.

“Debit card account” means a card account issued by a financial institution which allows the holder to transfer money electronically to another bank account when making a transaction. For the purposes of this bulletin, a debit card account includes the following:

- A single-use cash gift card (not related to the receipt of grant monies). A cash gift card is a debit card account with a set dollar amount and may be accepted by any retailer, similar to a debit card. The cash gift card is void upon spending the balance or expiration.
- A prepaid gift card (not related to the receipt of grant monies). A prepaid gift card is a debit card account that is reloadable, unlike the cash gift card.

In both examples above, the gift cards act like cash or debit cards and do not have built-in restrictions over employee spending.

Custody and Control Model

The custody and control model is a system in which the treasurer or fiscal officer maintains physical control over all credit cards of the entity and may use a system requiring the cards to be “signed out” by authorized, designated users. Entities utilizing the custody and control model should specify the following items in their written policies, approved by the governing board:

- Who the authorized, designated users are,
- A reasonable length of time the card is allowed to be out of the control of the treasurer or fiscal officer for the transaction(s) to be completed,¹ and
- The procedures that should be followed to submit itemized receipts, as well as any other entity specific requirements that would fit the needs of a political subdivision.
- An officer or employee is liable in person and upon any official bond the officer or employee has given to the political subdivision to reimburse the treasury for the amount

¹ Auditors will evaluate the length of time a card is out of the control of the treasurer or fiscal officer for reasonableness on a case-by-case basis as part of the upcoming audits of political subdivisions.

for which the officer or employee does not provide itemized receipts in accordance with the credit card policy.

Compliance Officer Model

The compliance officer model is a system in which the treasurer or fiscal officer does not maintain physical control of the credit cards. In this instance, a political subdivision must appoint a compliance officer. The compliance officer should not be the treasurer or fiscal officer and should not be an authorized user of the card or authorize use of the credit card by an individual. In certain instances in which the compliance officer is authorized to use a credit card, the compliance officer must have their credit card statement reviewed by the executive or legislative body of the entity.

A quarterly review process should take place where the compliance officer reviews the number of cards the entity has, the number of active cards the entity has, and the credit limit for each card. *(See the entity specific sections below for specific requirements of the compliance officer model.)*

Additional General Requirements

The name of the political subdivision must appear on each presentation instrument related to the account including cards and checks.

The use of a credit card account for expenses beyond those authorized by the legislative authority constitutes misuse of a credit card account. An officer or employee of the political subdivision or a public servant as defined under section 2921.01 of the Revised Code who knowingly misuses a credit card account held by the legislative authority violates section 2913.21 of the Revised Code, which is a misdemeanor of the first degree.

The fiscal officer or the fiscal officer's designee annually must file a report with the legislative authority detailing all rewards received based on the use of the political subdivision's credit card account.

No political subdivision may hold or utilize a debit card account, except for law enforcement purposes. Possession or use of a debit card account by a political subdivision, except law enforcement, is a violation of section 2913.21 of the Revised Code.

The requirements set forth in House Bill 312 do not apply to debit card accounts related to the receipt of grant moneys.

Entity Specific Requirements:

Township Specific Requirements

If a township fiscal officer does not retain general possession and control of the credit card and the entity must utilize the compliance officer model, the following applies:

In a township that has adopted a limited home rule government under Chapter 504 of the Revised Code, the board must appoint a compliance officer to perform the duties as outlined under the policy requirements. The compliance officer may not use a credit card account and may not authorize an officer, employee, or appointee to use a credit card account, with the exception of a board of township trustees serving in the role of compliance officer, then they may use a credit card if so authorized under the policy adopted by the township and may authorize an officer, employee, or appointee to use a credit card account as provided in the policy requirements. The fiscal officer is not eligible for appointment as compliance officer.

In a township that has not adopted a limited home rule government under Chapter 504 of the Ohio Revised Code, the fiscal officer must present credit card account transaction detail from the month previous, monthly to the board. The board must review the credit card transaction detail and the chairperson of the board must sign an attestation stating the board reviewed the credit card account transaction detail.

The compliance officer, if applicable, and the board, at least once every six months, must review the number of cards and accounts issued, the number of active cards, and accounts issued the cards' and accounts' expiration dates, and the cards' and accounts' credit limits.

The fiscal officer or the fiscal officer's designee annually must file a report with the board detailing all rewards received based on the use of the township's credit card account.

Municipal Corporations (Cities and Villages) Requirements

If a city auditor or village fiscal officer does not retain general possession and control of the credit card and the entity must utilize the compliance officer model, the following applies:

In a municipal corporation that has the authority to operate a mayor's court pursuant to Chapter 1905, of the Revised Code, the chief executive officer of the municipal corporation must appoint a compliance officer to perform the duties enumerated under the policy established. The compliance officer may not use a credit card account and may not authorize an officer or employee to use a credit card account. The village clerk or city auditor is not eligible for appointment as compliance officer.

In a municipal corporation that does not have the authority to operate a mayor's court pursuant to Chapter 1905 of the Revised Code, the village clerk or city auditor must present monthly the

legislative authority credit card account transaction detail from the previous month. The legislative authority must review the credit card account transaction detail and the presiding officer of the legislative authority must sign an attestation stating the legislative authority reviewed the credit card transaction detail.

The compliance officer, if applicable and the legislative authority at least quarterly must review the number of cards and accounts issued, the number of active cards and accounts issued, the cards' and accounts' expiration dates, and the cards' and accounts' credit limits.

The village clerk or city auditor, as applicable, or the designee of that applicable officer annually must file a report with the legislative authority detailing all rewards received based on the use of the municipal corporation's credit card account.

School District, Educational Service Center, or Information Technology Center Requirements

If a School District, Educational Service Center (ESC), or Information Technology Center (ITC) treasurer does not retain general possession and control of the credit card the governing authority must appoint a compliance officer.

Unless the compliance officer is a superintendent of a school district or chief administrator of an ITC, the compliance officer may not use the credit card account. The compliance officer may not authorize an officer or employee to use a credit card account. If a school district superintendent acting as compliance officer has authority to use a credit card account, the treasurer or the treasurer's designee, who must not be the school district superintendent, must review monthly the credit card account transaction detail and must sign an attestation stating the treasurer or designee reviewed the credit card account transaction detail. If the chief administrator of an ITC acting as compliance officer has authority to use a credit card account, the governing authority must review monthly the credit card account transaction detail and must sign an attestation stating the governing authority reviewed the credit card account transaction detail. The treasurer of the board of education, treasurer of the ESC, and chief fiscal officer of the ITC are not eligible for appointment as compliance officer. The superintendent of a school district or chief administrator of an ITC is eligible for appointment as compliance officer.

The compliance officer at least once every six months must review the number of cards and accounts issued, the number of active cards and accounts issued, the cards' and accounts' expiration dates, and the cards' and accounts' credit limits.

The treasurer or chief fiscal officer, as applicable, or the designee of that applicable officer annually must file a report with the board or authority detailing all rewards received based on the use of the credit card account.

Community School and STEM School Requirements

If a community or STEM school treasurer does not retain general possession and control of the credit card, the governing authority must appoint a compliance officer.

Except for a chief administrator of a community or STEM school serving as compliance officer, the compliance officer may not use a credit card account. The compliance officer may not authorize an officer or employee to use a credit card account. If a chief administrator acting as compliance officer has authority to use a credit card account, the governing authority must review the credit card account transaction detail monthly, and must sign an attestation stating the governing authority reviewed the credit card account transaction detail. The designated treasurer is not eligible for appointment as compliance officer. The chief administrator is eligible for appointment as compliance officer.

The compliance officer and the governing authority at least quarterly must review the number of cards and accounts issued, the number of active cards and accounts issued, the cards' and accounts' expiration dates, and the cards' and accounts credit limits.

The designated treasurer or the designated treasurer's designee annually must file a report with the governing authority detailing all rewards received based on the use of the community or STEM school's credit card account.

College Preparatory Boarding School Requirements

If the treasurer of the college-preparatory boarding school does not retain general possession and control of the cards, the board should appoint a compliance officer.

Except for a chief administrator of college-preparatory boarding school serving as compliance officer, the compliance officer may not use a credit card. If the chief administrator acting as compliance officer has authority to use a credit card account, the board must review the credit card account transaction detail monthly, and must sign an attestation stating the board reviewed the credit card account transaction detail. The treasurer is not eligible for appointment as compliance officer. The chief administrator is eligible for appointment as compliance officer.

The compliance officer and the governing body at least quarterly must review the number of cards and accounts issued, the number of active cards and accounts issued, the cards' and accounts' expiration dates, and the cards' and accounts' credit limits.

The treasurer or the treasurer's designee annually must file a report with the board detailing all rewards received based on the use of the college-preparatory boarding school's credit card account.

Library Requirements

If the fiscal officer of a free public library or library district does not retain general possession

and control of the credit card account, and presentation instruments related to the account include cards and checks, the board must appoint a compliance officer.

The compliance officer may use a credit card account only upon authority from the fiscal officer of the free public library or library district, except the director of a free public library or library district serving in the role of compliance officer may use a credit card if so authorized under the policy. If the compliance officer has authority to use a credit card account, the fiscal officer or the fiscal officer's designee, who must not be the compliance officer, monthly must review the credit card account transaction detail and must sign an attestation stating the fiscal officer or designee review the credit card account transaction detail. The compliance officer may not authorize an officer, employee, or appointee to use a credit card account, except a director serving in the role of compliance officer may authorize an officer, employee, or appointee to use a credit card account. The fiscal officer of the free public library or library district is not eligible for appointment as compliance officer. The director is eligible for appointment as compliance officer.

The compliance officer must review the number of cards and accounts issued at least once every six months, the number of active cards and accounts issued, the cards' and accounts' expiration dates, and the cards' and accounts' credit limits.

The fiscal officer or the fiscal officer's designee annually must file a report with the board detailing all rewards received based on the use of the free public library's or library district's credit card account.

Summary

Political subdivisions, except colleges and universities, are required to implement a credit card policy by February 2, 2019, if they already hold a credit card account. All other entities subject to this legislation must adopt a credit card policy before obtaining a credit card account. The policy should address each point as outlined in the legislation, at a minimum, with additional specific policy points to fit the needs of the entity. No political subdivision may hold or utilize a debit card account, except for law enforcement purposes. Possession or use of a debit card account by a political subdivision, except law enforcement, is a violation of section 2913.21 of the Revised Code.

Bulletin 2018-003

House Bill 312 Amendments to Regulate the Usage of Credit and Debit Cards

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Questions

If you have any questions regarding this bulletin, please contact the AOS Center for Audit Excellence at (800) 282-0370.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Yost". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dave" and last name "Yost" clearly legible.

Dave Yost
Auditor of State



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Denise Baba

Phone: 330.678.7745, EXT. 113

Email: dbaba@partaonline.org

PARTA TO RESUME FARE COLLECTION

Kent, Ohio – Thursday, May 21, 2020 – Fare collection will resume on Monday, June 1 for PARTA fixed route and Dial-A-Ride service. Regular fixed route fare is \$1 per trip or \$2 for an all-day pass on local routes. Dial-A-Ride fare is \$6 per trip. Express service to Akron and Cleveland remains suspended until further notice.

Reduced fare is available to adults 65 years of age and older, Medicare card holders, and persons with disabilities. Reduced fare card holders pay fifty cents per trip for each fixed route ride and \$3 for each Dial-A-Ride trip. Eligible individuals can obtain a reduced fare card by visiting the PARTA administrative offices at 2000 Summit Road in Kent or dialing 330-678-1287. Applications may also be downloaded at www.partaonline.org. A valid driver's license or Medicare card is required for processing.

Medicaid eligible individuals can obtain free medical transportation throughout Portage County via Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NET) provided by PARTA. More information is also available on the PARTA website or by contacting the PARTA administrative offices.

PARTA suspended fare collection March 18, 2020 due to concerns about possible transmission of the coronavirus (COVID-19) through handling currency and other fare media. Since then, the transit system has implemented numerous strategies to protect its employees and passengers during the pandemic. These include regular sanitation of buses, installing shields for drivers, providing drivers with personal protective equipment (PPE) and requesting riders wear a facial covering, maintain social distancing when possible and use hand sanitizer. Additionally, PARTA is promoting cashless fare payment going forward.

As fare collection resumes, PARTA encourages riders to use the transit's mobile ticketing app, EZfare, to avoid the need to handle cash or fare media. EZfare allows fixed route riders to purchase fares anytime, anywhere using a smartphone. All PARTA fixed route tickets are available on the app, including full and reduced one-way fares, day passes, and full and reduced monthly passes.

EZfare is free to download for iPhone and android phones. Tickets purchased through the app may be stored on a smartphone and activated moments before boarding the bus. Detailed information about the app and download links can be found at www.EZfare.us. Individuals who need assistance with the app may contact PARTA Travel Trainer Carlell Howard by phone at 330-678-7745, ext. 119 or by email at chowar22@partaonline.org.

Organized in 1975 under Section 306.32 of the Ohio Revised Code, PARTA provides fixed-route, ADA Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response service throughout Portage County. PARTA also operates the Kent Central Gateway Transit Center and parking deck in downtown Kent. In 2018, PARTA constructed the first Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station in Portage County.

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###

Claudia Amrhein named president of transportation advocacy group

PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein has been elected to serve as 2020 president of the Ohio Public Transit Association. OPTA is the primary advocate for public transportation in Ohio.

Amrhein took office following approval by OPTA members at their annual meeting in April. She will balance her volunteer responsibilities to OPTA with her duties at PARTA.



Amrhein

"I am so proud of her," said PARTA Board President Rick Bissler. "She has certainly represented herself — and PARTA — very well. OPTA made a great choice."

OPTA has been an important source of information and guidance for Ohio's public transit systems during the coronavirus outbreak. As part of her new role, Amrhein will take the lead in hosting statewide conference calls for OPTA members to share information and updates concerning the impact COVID-19 is having on public transit in Ohio. Amrhein also looks to continue OPTA's efforts to educate state and federal lawmakers about the importance of public transit.

In 2019, OPTA led the way in championing the need for a dedicated source of state financing for public transportation in Ohio. The Ohio legislature listened to OPTA and other transit stakeholders and included \$70 million in the general revenue fund as part of the current biennial budget to support public transportation. When planning for the next biennial budget begins in 2021, OPTA will renew its focus on ensuring state funding support for public transit.

"I'm honored and truly grateful for the opportunity to serve as president of OPTA," said Amrhein. "It's more important than ever for transit agencies to present a unified voice and vision for public transportation as an essential service for all Ohio communities."

Amrhein previously served as OPTA's secretary-treasurer and succeeds Carrie Woody, director of the Lancaster Public Transit System, as OPTA president. In addition to her service to OPTA, Amrhein is also the vice president of the Ohio Transit Risk Pool, treasurer of Ohio Health Transit Pool, vice-chair of the Portage County Transportation Improvement District, and treasurer of the Children's Advocacy Center of Portage County.

PARTA gets \$4.1 M in federal funds

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority will receive \$4.1 million in federal funding, money that the transit agency said will allow transit services to continue and keep workers on its payroll during the coronavirus pandemic.

"It's extremely important for us," said PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein. "Without it, like other agencies, we would have been looking at major cuts."

The federal funds will allow PARTA to keep its employees on the payroll "and off unemployment," Amrhein added. The money comes from \$25 billion earmarked for public transit in the federal \$2 trillion CARES package.

"We certainly are thankful to congress and the president for the funding and we hope that it will allow us to maintain our essential ser-

vices," Amrhein said.

On April 1, PARTA reduced service on all its fixed routes and initiated rotating employee work groups. The agency said the moves were necessary to protect the health and safety of its workforce while adapting to a sharp decline in ridership sparked by Gov. DeWine's 'Stay at Home' order, which was issued to contain spread of the coronavirus.

PARTA will begin to gradually ramp up service next week. However, loss of revenue is anticipated well into next year.

"We're still providing essential trips for the people of Portage County," said Amrhein. "We know that without the service PARTA provides, the current public health crisis would be even more challenging for those who depend on our service."



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Denise Baba

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PARTA TO BEGIN GRADUAL RAMP UP OF SERVICE

Kent, Ohio – Thursday, May 7, 2020 – Beginning the week of May 11 the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) will start ramping up service on some routes following temporary reductions due to COVID-19. The transit system plans to return to approximately two-thirds of its normal capacity as it gradually restores fixed route service. Express buses to Akron and Cleveland remain suspended.

“We have spent considerable time studying and discussing the best strategy for beginning to restore PARTA’s service levels, while at the same time prioritizing the safety of our employees and riders,” said PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein. PARTA tackled the issue after Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced measures April 27 to gradually reopen the state on May 1.

To accommodate an anticipated growth in ridership as some businesses reopen, PARTA will increase frequency and service hours for the Route 30 Interurban West and Route 35 Interurban East. Those buses will run every 30 to 60 minutes from 5:15 AM to 10 PM.

On April 1, PARTA reduced service on all its fixed routes and initiated rotating employee work groups to protect the health and safety of its workforce while adapting to a sharp decline in ridership precipitated by Governor DeWine’s ‘Stay at Home’ order issued to contain spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Administrative offices and the Kent Central Gateway transit center lobby were also closed to the public in accordance with the order. In addition, fare collection was suspended to prevent the possible spread of germs.

PARTA anticipates resuming full service and reopening the doors of its facilities to the public on June 1. Fare collection will likely resume this summer, though no official date has been set.

Transit riders are reminded that a newly issued statewide order, ‘Stay Safe Ohio,’ remains in effect. Travel should be limited to essential trip only. Unnecessary trips are strongly discouraged while concerns about the coronavirus pandemic remain active.

Passengers who must travel are encouraged to wear face masks. Other precautions include turning faces away from others and limiting talking while boarding the bus and when a driver needs to secure a mobility device; sitting 2 or 3 seats away from the driver and other passengers when possible; minimize coughing and sneezing; cover all coughs and sneezes; and stay home if you are sick.

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PARTA TO RECEIVE FTA FUNDS TO RESPOND TO COVID-19

Kent, Ohio – WEDNESDAY, May 6, 2020 – Today the Federal Transit Administration announced a \$4.1 million grant award to the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The grant will allow PARTA to continue to provide transit service and pay for wages and supplies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It’s extremely important for us,” said PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein. “Without it, like other agencies, we would have been looking at major cuts.”

The federal funds will allow PARTA to keep its employees on the payroll “and off unemployment,” Amrhein added. The money comes from \$25 billion earmarked for public transit in the federal \$2 trillion package approved by Congress and signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020.

“We certainly are thankful to Congress and the President for the funding and we hope that it will allow us to maintain our essential services,” said Amrhein. “PARTA continues to provide public transportation to help get individuals to work, grocery stores, medical appointments and other necessary trips to support the economic reopening of our economy and the long-term economic health of Portage County, the state and our nation.”

On April 1, PARTA reduced service on all its fixed routes and initiated rotating employee work groups to protect the health and safety of its workforce while adapting to a sharp decline in ridership precipitated by Governor DeWine’s ‘Stay at Home’ order issued to contain spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). PARTA will begin to gradually ramp up service next week. However, loss of revenue is anticipated well into next year.

“We’re still providing essential trips for the people of Portage County,” said Amrhein. “We know that without the service PARTA provides the current public health crisis would be even more challenging for those who depend on our service.”

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AMRHEIN TO LEAD TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

Kent, Ohio – Tuesday, May 5, 2020 – PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein has been elected to serve as 2020 president of the Ohio Public Transit Association. OPTA is the primary advocate for public transportation in Ohio. Amrhein took office following approval by OPTA members at their annual meeting in April. She will balance her volunteer responsibilities to OPTA with duties at PARTA.

"I am so proud of her," said PARTA Board President Rick Bissler. "She has certainly represented herself – and PARTA – very well. OPTA made a great choice."

OPTA has been an important source of information and guidance for Ohio's public transit systems during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. As part of her new role, Amrhein will take the lead in hosting statewide conference calls for OPTA members to share information and updates concerning the impact COVID-19 is having on public transit in Ohio. Amrhein also looks to continue OPTA's efforts to educate state and federal lawmakers about the importance of public transit.

In 2019, OPTA led the way in championing the need for a dedicated source of state financing for public transportation in Ohio. The Ohio legislature listened to OPTA and other transit stakeholders and included \$70 million in the general revenue fund as part of the current Biennial budget to support public transportation. When planning for the next biennial budget begins in 2021, OPTA will renew its focus on ensuring state funding support for public transit.

"I'm honored and truly grateful for the opportunity to serve as president of OPTA," said Amrhein. "It's more important than ever for transit agencies to present a unified voice and vision for public transportation as an essential service for all Ohio communities."

Amrhein previously served as OPTA's Secretary-Treasurer and succeeds Carrie Woody, Director of the Lancaster Public Transit System as OPTA president. In addition to her service to OPTA, Amrhein is also the Vice President of the Ohio Transit Risk Pool (OTRP), Treasurer of Ohio Health Transit Pool, Vice-Chair of the Portage County Transportation Improvement District, and Treasurer of the Children's Advocacy Center of Portage County.

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Record-Courier, Kent, Ohio

LIFE TIMES

Brimfield residents say 'thanks'



Submitted photo

Residents of the Just Cricket Condominium Association say "Thanks" to essential workers by posting a banner at the entrance to the association property on Tallmadge Road in Brimfield. Board members Vince Murdocco and Judy Kirman are shown erecting the sign. While condo residents remain at home, many workers keep life going by providing regular services. The condo residents appreciate the continuing services of US Postal Service, FedEx, UPS, Amazon Prime, Brimfield Police, Brimfield Fire, PARTA Transportation, Bako Landscaping, Republic Waste, GL Management, Portage Recycling, Spectrum, health care workers, newspaper delivery persons and those who deliver food.

Frank Hairston joins Mental Health & Recovery Board

Long-time Portage resident Frank Hairston joined the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Portage County in the fall of 2019.

The board is comprised of 18 volunteer members, with 10 being commissioner appointments and 8 appointed through the Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services.

Volunteering and serving his community have been



Hairston

an integral part of Hairston's life. Through the years, he has volunteered with the McElrath and Skeels communities, the Ravenna Area Chamber of Commerce, Ravenna Rotary, Ravenna Jaycees, Portage County NAACP, Community Action Council, Option 4 at Maplewood Career Center, the Portage County Black Caucus and the Portage County Access Program.

Hairston retired from the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority where he was the marketing director for seventeen years. He now considers

himself a full time community navigator.

"I am a messenger to the community and a voice for those who need it – especially the children."

Drug prevention and advocating for the community have been primary concerns of Hairston's. His involvement with the Mental Health & Recovery Board began several years ago when the commissioners convened a citizen task force to discuss the overcrowding at the jail. His was a constant voice for more drug and alcohol prevention classes for the children.

"We are extremely honored that Frank chose the Mental Health & Recovery Board as one of the organizations he will be serving in his retirement," said John Garrity, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board. "He is well-known and highly respected throughout Portage County. He has great knowledge of the community and is always willing to help take action where needed."

"Most of the time, people think about their health, but don't think about mental health," said Hairston. "However, mental health is an important part of life."



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PARTA ISSUES COVID-19 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RIDERS

Kent, Ohio – Thursday, April 9, 2020 – The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) has provided its drivers with face masks and is encouraging riders to wear them too. Recently Governor Mike DeWine began urging Ohioans use face masks as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to contain the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). The suggestion concerning face masks is just one of the moves PARTA is endorsing.

“We are doing all that we can to keep our employees and the public safe,” said PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein. “In addition to encouraging the use of face masks as recommended by the CDC and Governor DeWine, we’re also asking riders to take some extra precautions.”

In a statement issued Thursday morning, PARTA requested passengers observe some added safety measures to prevent the possible spread of germs. These include turning faces away from others and limiting talking while boarding the bus and when a driver needs to secure a mobility device; sitting 2 or 3 seats away from the driver and other passengers when possible; minimize coughing and sneezing; cover all coughs and sneezes; limit travel to essential trips only; and stay home if you are sick.

“Our drivers are our frontline workers. The nature of their job requires them to interact with the public,” said Amrhein. “We’re asking the public to help keep these essential workers safe.”

Thursday morning PARTA began providing surgical masks to its drivers. Last week the transit organization offered N-95 masks to its employees, however, these masks are not appropriate for individuals with facial hair and may cause fogging issues for those who wear glasses. In addition, PARTA maintenance crews are installing plexiglass shields for drivers. These shields will provide another barrier to help keep drivers safe.

Meanwhile, as noted previously, PARTA is urging riders to comply with the statewide ‘Stay at Home’ order and limit trips to essential travel only. Unnecessary trips and riding the bus as a form of recreation is strongly discouraged.

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###

Kent, KSU to share cost of East Main project

By KAITLYN MCGARVEY
Reporter

The city of Kent and Kent State University recently agreed to split costs associated with the multi-million dollar improvement of the East Main Street corridor. Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study (AMATS) director Curtis Baker addressed the project during a recent virtual meeting. It was briefly discussed

during a portion that outlined several road projects that will be constructed in the Greater Akron Area during the 2021-24 fiscal years. Baker described the planned improvement as a "very large" project that will be developed on the part of East Main Street that stretches from Willow Street to Horning Road.

"This project will include complete reconstruction with medians, roundabouts, sidewalk re-

placement and a lot of future development on the university side," Baker said.

The total project cost, he said, is approximately \$17.5 million. Kent City Engineer Jim Bowling clarified that the cost will be approximately \$20 million. The price Baker mentioned during the virtual meeting, Bowling said, was a "conceptual funding alternate." It is being continually re-

develop the project's cost. The local share for the project is around 10%.

In March, Kent City Council and the Kent State University Board of Trustees approved paperwork that allowed those entities to evenly split the local share of design costs up to a maximum of \$125,000 per entity. The local share of construction costs, which will also be divided between the two, is estimated in the

agreement to be around \$2.2 million. The trustees agreed to split 50% of that cost with the city. Any additional funds needed for the local construction cost match must be authorized by the trustees prior to entering into contracts.

The PARTA Board of Trustees also approved the agreement.

The city has received

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Share

From Page A1

commitments and grants totaling \$14.6 million currently, Bowling said. It will continue to pursue additional grant funding during the next appropriate application period.

A purpose and needs statement about the East Main Street area improvements laid out the project's goals. It said the project will be considered successful if it jointly improves safety and aesthetics (as a function of safety) for all users; bal-

ances vehicular congestion with improvements to other modes of transportation; enhances the adjacent neighborhoods; integrates with KSU's 2018 Gateway Master Plan; and provides reasonable access to adjacent properties and side streets.

According to a previous report, city council was informed that from 2016 to 2018, 12% of all crashes city-wide happened on the 0.8 mile of road that makes up the corridor that fronts Kent State University.

Bowling said he is currently working with a citizen's advisory group, Kent State University and PARTA to devise solutions and solve the corri-

dor's problems. Bowling said that plans for what will be built, specifically, have not been outlined yet.

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2024 and is anticipated to extend over multiple years. Traffic issues that will be caused by it have not been discussed at this point, Bowling said.

The citizen's advisory group for the project will still continue to discuss plans about the project. It will help the city determine one or more proposal alternates and then invite the public to comment on those plans. Those interested in being a part of it should contact Bowling at bowlingj@kent-ohio.org.

A2 • Thursday, April 2, 2020

WEATHER

PARTA makes cuts to bus service

Staff Report

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority has cut some of its services because of coronavirus.

PARTA stated that the bus company is making "significant changes" to its operating schedule. The changes began Wednesday and will remain in effect until further notice. A sharp decline in ridership and the necessity to implement rotating staff schedules made the adjustments necessary, said General Manager Claudia Amrhein, adding that the changes are part of an effort to comply with Ohio Gov. Mike Dewine's 'Stay at Home' order issued to contain the spread of coronavirus.

"The health and safety of PARTA's employees and passengers remains PARTA's central focus," Amrhein said. "By taking these measures, PARTA continues to balance the critical need to provide essential transit services while taking every precaution to protect our workforce and community members."

PARTA's fixed route buses have reduced their hours of operation and run from 5:15 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Service also will be less frequent during those hours. The Route 30 Interurban West and Route 35 Interurban East will run every 60 to 90 minutes. The Route 40 Suburban North and Route 45 Suburban South will run every 90 minutes. Other routes impacted include the Route 80 Raven West and Route 85 Raven East which will see their frequency reduced from 60 minutes to 60 to 120 minutes, depending on the time of day.

Saturday service for the Interurban East and West routes is also changing. The new hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.. Frequency will be reduced to every 2.5 to 3 hours. The Route 90 Akron Express and Route 100 Cleveland Express bus service is being suspended. No changes are planned to the Route 70 Windham-Garrettsville service. One bus will continue to serve the Kent State University main

campus.

Spot PARTA, the transit's app which allows riders to locate buses in real-time, will be down from Wednesday, April 1 through Monday, April 6 as the schedule changes are uploaded. Revised schedules have been published on the PARTA website and can be viewed by going to www.partaonline.org.

PARTA's Dial-a-Ride service remains in operation, but transportation is limited to essential trips only, in light of the governor's order restricting unnecessary travel during the coronavirus crisis. Riders with weakened immune systems who must travel, particularly dialysis patients, are encouraged to wear protective masks.

When using public transportation during the current coronavirus outbreak, passengers are urged to adhere to public health recommendations regarding social distancing and use hand sanitizer. Most importantly, those who are sick should stay home.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PARTA ADJUSTS SERVICE AMID REDUCED RIDERSHIP

Kent, Ohio - Tuesday, March 31, 2020 – The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) is making significant changes to its operating schedule. Service modifications will take effect Wednesday, April 1 and will remain in effect until further notice. A sharp decline in ridership and the necessity to implement rotating staff schedules precipitated the adjustments in an effort to comply with Ohio Governor Mike Dewine's 'Stay at Home' order issued to contain the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

"The health and safety of PARTA's employees and passengers remains PARTA's central focus," stated General Manager Claudia Amrhein. "By taking these measures, PARTA continues to balance the critical need to provide essential transit services while taking every precaution to protect our workforce and community members," Amrhein said.

Starting Wednesday, PARTA's fixed route buses will reduce their hours of operation and run from 5:15 AM to 9:30 PM. Service will also be less frequent during those hours. The Route 30 Interurban West and Route 35 Interurban East will run every 60 to 90 minutes. The Route 40 Suburban North and Route 45 Suburban South will run every 90 minutes. Other routes impacted include the Route 80 Raven West and Route 85 Raven East which will see their frequency reduced from 60 minutes to 60 to 120 minutes depending on the time of day.

Saturday service for the Interurban East and West routes is also changing. The new hours of operation are 8 AM to 7:30 PM. Frequency will be reduced to every 2.5 to 3 hours. Meanwhile, the Route 90 Akron Express and Route 100 Cleveland Express bus service is being suspended. No changes are planned to the Route 70 Windham-Garrettsville service. Furthermore, one bus will continue to service the Kent State University main campus.

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PARTA's Dial-a-Ride service remains in operation, but transportation is limited to essential trips only. Governor DeWine's 'Stay-at-Home' order restricts unnecessary travel and movement during the coronavirus crisis. Riders with weakened immune systems who must travel, particularly dialysis patients, are encouraged to wear protective masks.

When using public transportation during the current coronavirus outbreak, passengers are urged to adhere to public health recommendations regarding social distancing and use of hand sanitizer. Most importantly, if you are sick, stay home.

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Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA)
2000 Summit Rd. ■ Kent, Ohio 44240 ■ Phone: 330.678.7745 ■ FAX: 330.676.6310

PARTA closes lobby of Central Gateway facility

The lobby of the Kent Central Gateway parking deck and transit facility will be closed to the public until further notice. Transit riders will no longer have access to the KCG lobby or its bathroom facilities.

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority, which operates the facility, cited Ohio Department of Health recommendations regarding social distancing and Gov. Mike DeWine's Stay at Home order issued Sunday as the reason for the closure. The directive from the state requires all nonessential businesses to cease operation during the coronavirus outbreak.

While public transportation has been identified as a necessary service, certain functions associated with the operation of the transit center have been deemed nonessential based on state guidelines. PARTA buses will continue to pick up and drop off passengers at KCG. In addition, public parking remains available in the deck. Maintenance and security personnel will stay on site.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PARTA CLOSES KCG LOBBY TO PUBLIC

Kent, Ohio - Tuesday, March 24, 2020 – The lobby of the Kent Central Gateway (KCG) parking deck and transit facility will be closed to the public from Tuesday, March 24 until further notice. Transit riders will no longer have access to the KCG lobby or its bathroom facilities.

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) which operates the facility cited Ohio Department of Health recommendations regarding social distancing and Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's 'Stay at Home' order issued Sunday as the reason for the closure. The directive from the state requires all nonessential businesses to cease operation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

While public transportation has been identified as a necessary service, certain functions associated with the operation of the transit center have been deemed nonessential based on state guidelines. PARTA buses will continue to pick up and drop off passengers at KCG. In addition, public parking remains available in the deck. Maintenance and security personnel will stay on site.

Though PARTA buses continue to operate, the public is encouraged to observe Governor DeWine's 'Stay-at-Home' order restricting unnecessary travel and movement during the coronavirus crisis. According to the state mandate, travel should be limited to certain common-sense exceptions. These include trips necessary for health and safety, to obtain needed supplies or services, to travel to jobs deemed essential and to take care of others.

When using public transportation during the current coronavirus outbreak, passengers are urged to adhere to public health recommendations regarding social distancing and use of hand sanitizer. Most importantly, if you are sick, stay home.

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PARTA Closes Administrative Offices to Public

Kent, OH – March 20, 2020 – Effective Monday, March 23, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) will close its administrative office to the public. The facility located at 2000 Summit Road in Kent will remain closed until Monday, April 6. Administrators will re-evaluate the need to keep the building closed to the public at that time. PARTA employees will continue to report to work.

“We believe it’s in the best interest of our employees to limit public access to our facility at this time,” said PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein. “Most visitors access the building to purchase fare or address other fare related issues.” PARTA stopped collecting fare earlier this week for its fixed route, Dial-A-Ride and ADA bus services to limit the possible spread of disease through handling of cash and tickets.

Meanwhile, the Kent Central Gateway transit center remains open to the public and will continue to operate as normal. Individuals with questions or concerns about PARTA service can call its customer service number at 330-676-6701 or go to www.partaonline.org.

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###

PARTA to stop collecting fares for bus service

Starting Wednesday, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority won't collect fares from passengers to minimize close interactions between them and drivers.

The move applies to fixed-routes, dial-a-ride and ADA services.

"The safety of our employees and our passengers is of utmost importance especially during this uncertain time," PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein said. "We are taking whatever steps we can to protect passengers and employees from the spread of the novel Coronavirus while continuing to balance employee safety and service delivery," Amrhein said.

In addition to ceasing fare collection, PARTA will not sell fares on buses or at its offices at 2000 Summit Road in Franklin Township and the Kent Central Gateway Multimodal Facility in downtown Kent.

PARTA also announced additional changes to its campus bus service for Kent State University. Service will be further reduced on Wednesday with the elimination of the 51 Campus Loop, 53 Reverse Loop and 58 Summit East bus routes. The 57 Stadium Loop bus will operate every 15 minutes for the rest of the week. Starting March 23 through March 27, KSU's spring break week, the route 57 bus will run every 30 minutes. County bus service will continue to operate as normal with the exception of fare collection.

"Even with the extensive cleaning and disinfecting measures we are utilizing, out of an abundance of caution, we are minimizing contact between people through equipment, cash, and card payment transactions. This is an additional step we are taking on top of utilizing the rigorous, proven effective hygiene, cleaning, and preventive protocols recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Federal Transit Authority, and the Ohio Department of Health," Amrhein said.

Those preventive/protective measures include:

- Using hospital grade disinfectant to clean and sanitize all buses, transit centers, and offices multiple times each day;
- Providing hand sanitizer to employees, passengers, and others on our buses, transit centers, and offices; and
- Instructing drivers and all employees to abide by the CDC's prevention and protection guidelines.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Denise Baba

Phone: 330.678.7745

Email: dbaba@partaonline.org

PARTA Discontinues Fare Collection During COVID-19

Kent, OH – March 17, 2020 – Effective March 18, the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) will discontinue collecting fare from passengers to facilitate social distancing for its drivers and transit passengers. Until further notice, passengers riding PARTA's fixed route or demand response or utilizing ADA service will not be charged fare while Coronavirus COVID-19 prevention measures are in full effect.

"The safety of our employees and our passengers is of utmost importance especially during this uncertain time," PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein said. "We are taking whatever steps we can to protect passengers and employees from the spread of the novel Coronavirus while continuing to balance employee safety and service delivery," Amrhein said.

In addition to ceasing fare collection, PARTA will not sell fare media on buses or at its offices at 2000 Summit Road in Franklin Township and the Kent Central Gateway Multimodal Facility in downtown Kent.

PARTA also announced additional changes to its campus bus service for Kent State University. Service will be further reduced on Wednesday with the elimination of the 51 Campus Loop, 53 Reverse Loop and 58 Summit East bus routes. The 57 Stadium Loop bus will operate every 15 minutes for the rest of the week. Starting Monday, March 23 through Friday March 27, KSU's spring break week, the route 57 bus will run every 30 minutes. County bus service will continue to operate as normal with the exception of fare collection.

"Even with the extensive cleaning and disinfecting measures we are utilizing, out of an abundance of caution, we are minimizing contact between people through equipment, cash, and card payment transactions. This is an additional step we are taking on top of utilizing the rigorous, proven effective hygiene, cleaning, and preventive protocols recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Federal Transit Authority, and the Ohio Department of Health," Amrhein said.

Those preventive/protective measures include:

- Using hospital grade disinfectant to clean and sanitize all buses, transit centers, and offices multiple time each day;
- Providing hand sanitizer to employees, passengers, and others on our buses, transit centers, and offices; and
- Instructing drivers and all employees to abide by the CDC's prevention and protection guidelines.

PARTA also strongly encourages passengers to use the CDC's tips to protect themselves and others from COVID-19:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze in the crevice of your elbow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the restroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Always wash hands with soap and water if they are visibly dirty.

A complete list of the CDC's protection/prevention measures may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>. Links to the CDC page, updates about the situation, PARTA's response, and other relevant news may be found on PARTA's Facebook page and www.PARTAonline.com.

PARTA provides fixed-route, ADA Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response service throughout Portage County. PARTA also operates the Kent Central Gateway Transit Center and parking deck in downtown Kent. In 2018, PARTA constructed the first Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station in Portage County.

For more information, contact PARTA Communications and Public Advocacy Advisor Denise Baba at 330.678.7745 ext. 113 or email dbaba@partaonline.org.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Denise Baba

Phone: 330.678.7745, EXT. 113

Email: dbaba@partaonline.org

PARTA temporarily reduces KSU bus service

Kent, Ohio - Friday, March 13, 2020 – Beginning Monday, March 16, Kent State University (KSU) campus bus service will be limited to the 51 Campus Loop, 53 Reverse Loop and 58 Summit East bus routes. Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) representatives, in consultation with KSU, have moved to temporarily discontinue service on the 55 Allerton and 59 Stadium Night Loop routes through Friday, March 20.

Changes to campus bus service were prompted by the suspension of in-person classes at KSU until April 13. Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine called for face-to-face classes to move online or be taught remotely due to concerns about the Coronavirus.

KSU's spring break begins Monday, March 23. During spring break week, campus bus service will be limited to the 57 Stadium Loop route. PARTA's off-campus fixed route and Dial-A-Ride bus service remain unaffected by changes to service at KSU. County bus service will run as normal.

PARTA continues to operate with caution to prevent the spread of germs, the novel coronavirus and protect the safety of its passengers and employees. Our passengers can rest assured that we are implementing the most rigorous and effective cleaning protocols.

PARTA is taking preventive steps including:

- Increasing the sanitation frequency of buses, our transit center and offices with hospital grade disinfectant.
- Providing hand sanitizer to employees and transit passengers.
- Providing no-touch waste disposal receptacles on buses for passengers to discard used tissues.

PARTA continues to receive guidance from local, state and federal officials to stay abreast of current health directives related to the Coronavirus and to take steps necessary to prevent the spread of germs.

PARTA encourages passengers to follow the CDC guidelines for germ prevention. These tips include:

- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze in the crevice of your elbow.
- Respect personal space.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the restroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

To avoid interaction at transit centers, consider using EZfare to purchase tickets and passes.

Please regularly check our Facebook and Twitter feeds for updated postings.

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Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA)
2000 Summit Rd. ■ Kent, Ohio 44240 ■ Phone: 330.678.7745 ■ FAX: 330.676.6310

PARTA making changes to campus routes

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority will maintain its normal Campus Bus Service operating schedule for Kent State University through Saturday, with the exception of the 55 Allerton bus, which will go out of service as of 5:21 p.m. Wednesday.

The Sunday Route 59 Stadium Loop will have its schedule shortened. It will run every 30 minutes from 4 to 10:30 p.m. with no late-night shuttle service.

After this week, PARTA said it will examine staffing levels and ridership numbers before making additional changes to campus routes next week.

PARTA's off-campus fixed route and Dial-A-Ride bus service is not affected by the changes at Kent State. No changes in service is planned for PARTA's county service.

On Tuesday afternoon, Kent State announced the suspension of in-person classes and is encouraging students to go home. Classes will be held online and will resume in person on April 13. However, residence halls will remain open as will faculty offices, some dining halls and the library.

"PARTA is in communication with KSU and is continuing discussions about the need for on-campus bus service," said Amrhein. "This is a fluid situation since students who cannot go home will remain in the residence halls."



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Denise Baba

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PARTA examining KSU bus service as students leave campus

Kent, Ohio - Wednesday, March 11, 2020 –The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) will operate most campus bus routes as usual for Kent State University through the rest of this week. One exception is the Route 55 Allerton bus which goes out of service Wednesday afternoon at 5:21 PM at the student center. Announcements about the temporary discontinuation of the Allerton route are being posted by PARTA at campus bus stops.

Tuesday afternoon KSU announced the suspension of in-person classes and is encouraging students to go home during the suspension. The action came in response to Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine's call to move face-to-face classes online or teach them remotely due to concerns about the Coronavirus.

Starting Sunday, PARTA will begin to ramp down service on the KSU campus. The only bus that runs on Sunday, the Route 59 Stadium Night Loop, will have its schedule shortened. It will run every 30 minutes from 4 PM to 10:30 PM. There will be no late-night shuttle service.

Going forward, PARTA will examine staffing levels and ridership numbers before making additional changes to campus routes next week. PARTA and KSU officials are continuing to work together to determine how to best deploy resources.

"We will work diligently to review ridership numbers and employee numbers to provide effective transportation to KSU," said PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein.

PARTA operates Campus Bus Service employing KSU students as drivers. On campus routes include the 51 Campus Loop, 53 Reverse Loop, 55 Allerton Sports Complex, 57 Stadium Loop, 58 Summit East, and 59 Stadium Night Loop.

PARTA's off-campus fixed route and Dial-A-Ride bus service is not affected by the situation at Kent State. No change is planned for PARTA's county service.

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###

CORONAVIRUS

Kent State, Akron cancel in-person classes

Dorms will remain open; Bio-Med also moving on online classes

By KRISTA S. KANO
Reporter

Kent State University, the University of Akron and Northeast Ohio Medical University in Rootstown are all heeding Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine's call to move in-person classes online or teach them remotely.

The decisions came Tuesday, one day

after DeWine announced that three cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Cuyahoga County and declared a state of emergency.

And while DeWine's recommendation doesn't include K-12 schools, Bio-Med Science Academy, which has buildings in Rootstown, Shalersville and Ravenna for grades 4-12, announced Tuesday that it also will move to online classes.

At Kent State, in-person classes were cancelled for all campuses starting Tuesday evening through March 15. Classes will be conducted remotely March 16 through April 13, with the exception of spring break, which is the week of March 23.

The University of Akron is canceling

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Virus

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classes through the rest of this week and next week and will switch to remote instruction March 30, after students return from spring break.

Dorms at Kent State and UA will remain open.

"We take all of these steps to ensure the health and safety of our campus community and to be proactive in an effort to prevent illness while continuing the academic mission of the university," Kent State President Todd Diacon wrote in an email to the university community.

Diacon "strongly encouraged" students to return to their homes, but said that residence halls would remain open with reduced dining options. University spokesman Eric Mansfield said the health department is not asking the university to outright close residence halls.

Kent City Manager Dave Ruller said city officials are focusing on the community's health.

"We're busy working on our city continuity plans to ensure city services will be ready if the virus finds its way into our community," he said. "We're following the lead of the city's health commissioner (Joan Seidel) and she's indicated to me that she thinks the decision to teach classes remotely should reduce the chances of exposure to the virus locally."

Kent Mayor Jerry Fiala said that city administration has not yet discussed how the university's decision will impact the local economy. However, he anticipates downtown businesses will be somewhat affected. Hopefully the impact is not big, he said, and will be more akin to how the area is affected by the absence of students over the summer months.

"It's something that we'll get through," Fiala said. "It's better to take the safeguards we are now and not wait for down the road when it could be worse and maybe have a bigger impact."

PARTA Spokeswoman Denise Baba said the transportation agency just recently learned of the changes at Kent State and would be updating information on how it impacts bus routes.

Portage County's public school superintendents had already scheduled a meeting for Wednesday to coordinate their responses to coronavirus, although the Kent School District sent out a notification to parents Tuesday evening that schools would remain open unless they are directed to close.

NEOMED's move to online instruction is effective Wednesday.

"The campus will be open, but our goal is to increase preparedness and reduce the chance of any spread. It's

more precautionary to advance public health, so we're limiting any large-size events, which includes classrooms and events that are university sanctioned through April 3," NEOMED spokesman Roderick Ingram Sr. said Tuesday.

The NEW Center, which includes the recreation center, pharmacy and SOAR Clinic, are developing a policy for their tenants and services that will be released soon, Ingram said.

Officials at Hiram College, which is on spring break, did not return calls for comment.

At Kent State, the university library will be accessible and faculty can continue to use their offices. All campuses will remain open to serve students who rely on services, including health services, dining services, residence halls and intercollegiate athletic facilities. However, the Warren Student Recreation and Wellness Center will be closed until April 13, and all university-sponsored travel, both domestic and international, is canceled through April 13.

The university has also canceled all meetings and events scheduled for campus locations through April 12. Mansfield said that those cancella-

tions include 14 events scheduled as part of the university's 50th Commemoration of May 4, 1970.

Athletic events will follow NCAA and Mid-American Conference guidelines.

"While completing classes remotely, students are encouraged to practice appropriate social distancing and enhanced preventative public health and hygiene measures," Diacon wrote.

"We'll have more information in the days ahead. Right now it's just determining what's happening academically," Mansfield said.

The Ohio Department of Health has been monitoring travelers coming back from China and Iran. It monitored a total of 24, with two still being watched.

None has developed symptoms of fever, cough and shortness of breath. The department is awaiting the results of two patients who have been tested and should get results by the end of the week.

For more information on COVID-19 in Ohio, the state coronavirus call center can be reached by dialing 1-833-427-5634.

Reporters from the Columbus Dispatch contributed to this story.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Denise Baba

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Campus bus service unchanged for Wednesday 3/11/20

Kent, Ohio - Tuesday, March 10, 2020 – Campus Bus Service (CBS) will continue to maintain its normal operating schedule for Kent State University on Wednesday, March 11. “Beyond Wednesday, we will evaluate service levels and make adjustments as necessary,” said Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) General Manager Claudia Amrhein.

Tuesday afternoon KSU announced the suspension of in-person classes and is encouraging students to go home during the suspension. PARTA operates Campus Bus Service employing KSU students as drivers. On campus routes include the 51 Campus Loop, 53 Reverse Loop, 55 Allerton Sports Complex, 57 Stadium Loop, 58 Summit East, and 59 Stadium Night Loop.

“PARTA is in communication with KSU and is continuing discussions about the need for on-campus bus service,” said Amrhein. “This is a fluid situation since students who cannot go home will remain in the residence halls.”

PARTA’s off-campus fixed route and Dial-A-Ride bus service is not affected by the situation at Kent State. No changes in service is planned for PARTA’s county service.

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For more information contact PARTA Communications and Public Advocacy Advisor Denise Baba at 330.678.7745 or email dbaba@partaonline.org.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Denise Baba

Phone: 330.678.7745

Email: dbaba@partaonline.org

PARTA Safety Initiatives Surrounding COVID-19

Kent, OH – March 6, 2020 – The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) is actively engaged in efforts to ensure the health and safety of its passengers and employees during the novel (new) Coronavirus outbreak that has impacted many parts of the country. While there currently are no reported cases of the disease in Ohio, and risk of contracting the disease is low, PARTA acknowledges that people may be feeling anxiety and concern about the safety of public transit.

“This is not the first time PARTA has had to address concerns about the potential threat of a communicable disease,” said PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein. “We maintain an up-to-date Pandemic Plan, comply with protocol for containing the spread of infectious disease issued by health authorities and communicate regularly with state and federal networks monitoring trends in public transportation.”

PARTA buses and facilities are thoroughly cleaned daily, as are public areas of the Kent Central Gateway transit center. All hard surfaces of buses are wiped down and a hospital-grade disinfectant is sprayed throughout each bus. PARTA also provides alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations on every bus and throughout its buildings for use by passengers and employees.

Community members can also take action to help prevent the spread of disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following: wash hands often using soap and water; if soap and water are not available, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol is advised; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands to avoid transferring germs; cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the in the trash and wash your hands. Finally, if you’re sick, stay home.

PARTA provides fixed-route, ADA Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response service throughout Portage County. PARTA also operates the Kent Central Gateway Transit Center and parking deck in downtown Kent. In 2018, PARTA constructed the first Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station in Portage County.

For more information, contact PARTA Communications and Public Advocacy Advisor Denise Baba at 330.678.7745 ext. 113 or email dbaba@partaonline.org.

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Kent State to contribute \$2.2 million to East Main improvements

By KRISTA S. KANO
Reporter

Kent State University will pay \$2.2 million over seven years toward alleviating traffic congestion and safety concerns along East Main Street from Willow Street to Horning Road.

The university is working with the city of Kent and the Portage Area Regional Transit Authority on the \$20 million project, which will include four through lanes of traffic, a wider sidewalk on the north side of the road, bus pull-offs and improved lighting.

The partnership will allow the city to seek federal funding to improve the roadway, signals, pedestrian/bicycle facilities and mass-transit infrastructure. After the initial study phase was completed, the city was awarded the majority of the necessary funds. The city and university will share costs, similar to the Summit Street improvement project that was completed in 2018 that added two roundabouts among other improvements.

Between 2016 and 2018, 12% of all crashes in the city happened on the 0.8 mile of road that makes up the corridor. Jim Bowling, the city's deputy service director, said last year that the stretch is so dangerous because drivers encounter a lot of input while driving. Not only can they turn

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left and right, they need to watch the actions of cars ahead as well as pedestrians.

"If they're doing that and moving too fast at the same time, it's basically too many options, too many inputs for the driver to assimilate without making a mistake," Bowling said at the time. "Once they make a mistake,

that's when a crash happens."

The East Main project will be developed in alignment with Phase I of the university's \$1.28 billion, 10-year Gateway master plan. Phase I includes the new College of Business and Administration building and its new parking deck, an expansion of the Fashion School, the realignment of Terrace Drive, among other projects. Construction on the new parking deck is expected to begin after the 50th Commemoration of May 4, 1970 this year with plans for it to

be open for the fall 2021 semester.

"We've been working with the city of Kent and PARTA to create a more vibrant city-campus community for the university and city environment. The city is the lead agency in the management of this project and a mutually agreed upon design consultant will provide professional survey and engineering services in the preliminary and final design," Trustee Don Mason said Tuesday.

Kent State will pay for the project using university facility renewal and replacement funds.

New data may bring expansion of Kent's summer reading programs

By KRISTA S. KANO
Reporter

The Kent City School District is planning to expand its Rough Riders Read summer program to more heavily target economically disadvantaged students, but will likely end its use of the online Accelerated Readers program, based on a data analysis by Kent State University.

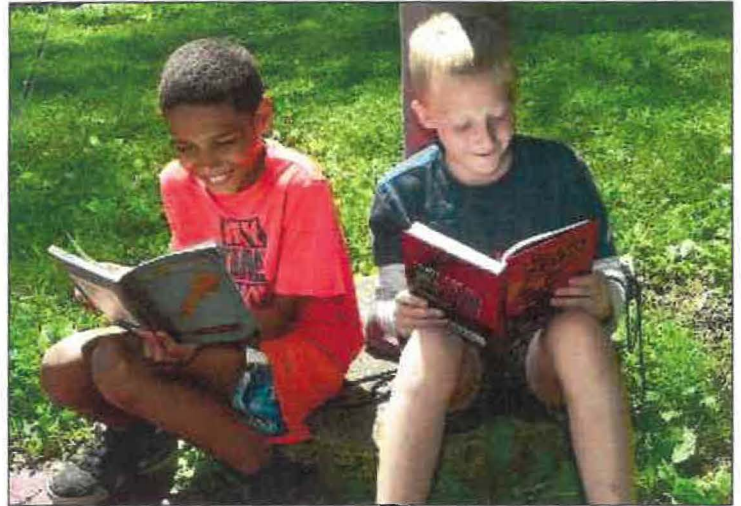
The analysis — run by three graduate students in the College of Education, Health and Human Services — looked at 281 students' scores on reading tests before and after participating in the two summer reading programs. Their work was done as part of the Team Kent collaboration.

In an initial study completed two years ago, they found that

students typically had lower reading scores in the beginning of the school year than they did at the end of the previous school year, which is commonly known as the summer slide.

"We noticed the summer drop and [Kent] implemented the reading programs. This is good because not all people will really consider our findings as something to make a real, evidence-based action, but Kent did this and that's a good thing," said Amal Alhadabi, a PhD. candidate who headed the study.

Rough Riders Read brought the district's mobile learning lab to six different locations throughout the summer and allowed students to take home one book at



Kevin Graff, Record-Courier

Jaelon Smith, 10, and King Milton, 9, sit and look at their new books at a Rough Riders Read event last summer.

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Reading

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each event. Organizers also provided food and prizes to further entice participation.

Accelerated Readers was an online reading program that the district received for free as a pilot program. Students would read excerpts of books and take tests that would propel them to a new level and receive prizes. The program was targeted to specific students, but anyone could participate, Superintendent George Joseph said.

According to Alhadabi, the Rough Riders Read results showed that there was no significant difference between pre- and post-scaled scores, implying that the program was effective in reducing the summer reading drop. However, there was a significant drop when looking at national percentile rankings.

"That unfortunately tells you that as well as you're doing, other districts nationally are doing better, so there may be a case for talking to other districts and finding out what they're doing," said Steve Mitchell, associate dean for Administrative Affairs and Graduate Education and adviser of the project.

The presented data was analyzed collectively, regardless of how many Rough Riders Read events the student attended. However, Mitchell said the team did find that higher engagement only slightly improved percentile rankings and did not correlate with scaled scores.

Meanwhile, the Accelerated Readers program showed a significant

drop in scores in both the scaled scores and percentile rankings.

"This signals that the program did not create the desired effect. However, we cannot generalize this conclusion because there are multiple intervening factors such as the regular summer drop, and maybe student characteristics because different students participated in these two summer programs," Alhadabi said.

The study further looked at the differences in scaled scores for students who participated in either program based on gender. It found that while female students maintained their scores throughout the summer, male students increased their scores in post-program tests.

"This shows that males showed a higher growth after implementing these two programs. So these two summer programs were successful in closing the gender gap in reading, which is a good thing," Alhadabi said.

However, the district was not as successful at closing the economic gap, Alhadabi added.

"The gap between the two groups are approximately similar before and after implementing the summer programs. The gap between the two was not ameliorated after implementing the summer programs, raising the dilemma of equality versus equity," Alhadabi said.

Alhadabi recommended that the district implement programs to reach the two economic groups differently. Mitchell said that the district may want to consider the Rough Riders Read locations in terms of transportation, noting that one location, Beckwith Orchards, was not easily accessible to economically

disadvantaged students who may have limited access to transportation.

"So perhaps one of the thoughts is that the summer reading programs need to target areas where you know there to be more economically disadvantaged students. With a program that provides equal access to all students, everyone stays the same. If you really want to close the gap, you have to provide equitable access, which means not everyone gets the same access because not everyone needs the same access," Mitchell said.

Board member Pamela Ferguson agreed, noting that the district has a free or reduced lunch rate of 46%, meaning that nearly half of the district's students are considered economically disadvantaged. She suggested the district partner with established summer food programs that already have strategies to reach these populations.

As the district digests the new information and plans for next year's summer reading programs, Joseph said the district would likely not use Accelerated Readers again, but would like to replicate the successes of Rough Riders Read and address transportation concerns.

Joseph said they are now looking at their most successful Rough Riders Read events, like the one at Al Lease Park that was in walking distance for many students, and find additional locations that could garner the same results.

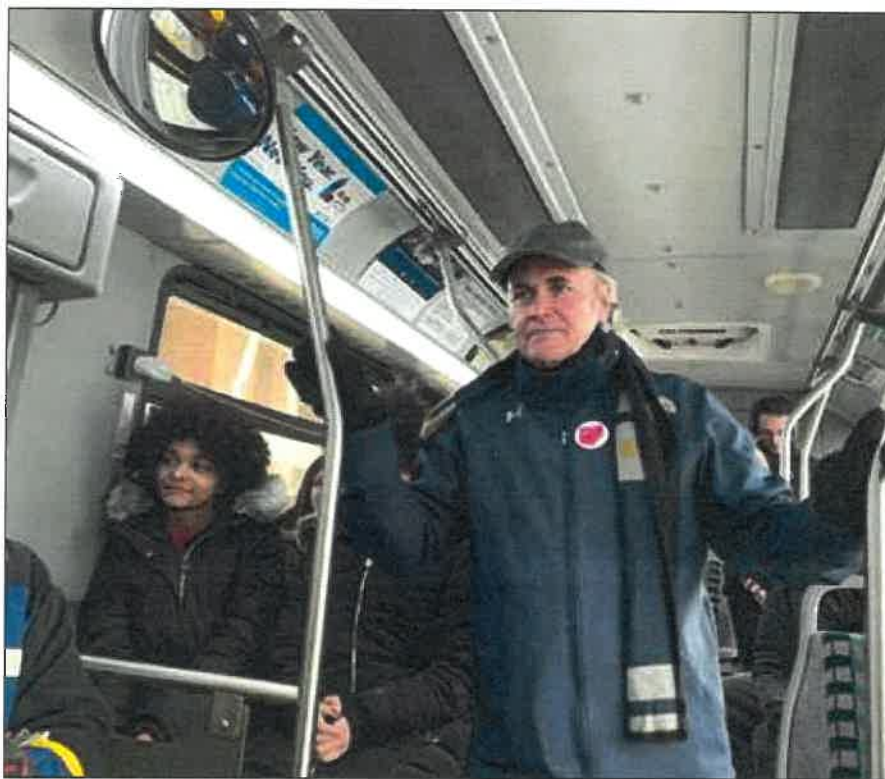
"We'll try something in downtown Kent, somewhere off a PARTA line so it's easy to take, and we're considering how we can get PARTA passes for families and invite them. so they

Elected officials ride PARTA buses

The Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority celebrated Ohio Loves Transit Day on Feb. 14.

Local elected officials joined PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein on various bus routes throughout the day. Those helping PARTA recognize the special day included Kent State University President Todd Diacon along with KSU mascot Flash, State Rep. Randi Clites, Portage County Commissioner Kathleen Clyde, Kent Mayor Jerry Fiala, Kent City Manager Dave Ruller, and PARTA Board members Debbie Davison, David Gynn, Virginia Harris, Marge Bjerregarrd along with PARTA board attorney Bill Nome.

Ohio Loves Transit Day is an annual event sponsored by the Ohio Public Transit Association in cooperation with Ohio's 61 transit systems. The goal is to highlight the benefits of public transportation



Submitted photos
Kent State University President Todd Diacon rides the Summit East Campus Bus.



Portage County Commissioner Kathleen Clyde speaks with PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein on the route 45 Suburban South bus.



Kent Mayor Jerry Fiala, foreground, with Kent City Manager Dave Ruller and PARTA General Manager Claudia Amrhein ride the Route 30 Interurban West bus.

L2 • Sunday, February 23, 2020

LIFE TIMES

Record-Courier, Kent, Ohio

Retired Teachers gather to plan for 2020

The Portage County Retired Teachers Executive Committee met recently to plan activities and events for 2020. Led by President Chris DeMarco, the group focused on membership, public awareness, Facebook presence, luncheon programs and newsletters.

The county organization is a chapter of Ohio Retired Teachers Association, whose primary focus is to protect and preserve retired teachers' pensions and health care.

While other retired employee groups are suffering ill effects of changes in their pension and health care programs, ORTA continues to work with state legislators and the State Teachers Retirement System to strengthen the programs.

Membership in PCRTA is open to any retired educator and anyone interested in education and the issues of retirees. A strong membership base is needed to work effectively with the legislature. Retired educators who have not yet joined the group should contact Judy Hendershot, membership chair, at 330-673-4576.

The March 19 program will feature a tribute to members who have passed away during the past year. Dorothy Rinier, Leona Livezey, Richard Lewis, Robert Clawson, Judith Clawson, Saun-



Submitted photo

Portage County Retired Teachers Association officers meet with the executive committee to plan 2020 activities and events. Treasurer Dave Gynn, Vice President Helena Parry, President Chris DeMarco and Recording Secretary Carole Stokes review the agenda. Officers not pictured are Corresponding Secretary Denise Craig and Assistant Treasurer Darlene Fetterhoff.

dra Weaver and Francis Smouse will be remembered. The May 21 program will feature Kathy Kraus showing Civil War quilts and discussing their hidden messages to people on the Underground Railroad.

Scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each will be presented in July to high school seniors who plan to become teachers. Winners of PCRTA's first teacher grants

will be recognized. Gretchen Sivinski at Ravenna High School and Nicole Giammo and Vanessa Shafer at James A. Garfield Middle School will report on their innovative programs.

A program whereby PCRTA members proctor tests at NEOCOM, along with other fundraising efforts and personal contributions, helps fund the student scholarships and teacher

grants. Community members who shop at Amazon can click on Amazon Smile and Amazon will contribute to the PCRTA scholarship fund.

Volunteerism is an important component for the association. Each year, members volunteer thousands of hours in many community organizations. At each bi-monthly program, the social committee encourages donations to

local non-profit organizations including County Clothing Center, Family & Community Services, Coleman Professional Services, Big Brother/Big Sisters and Maplewood Aspire GED graduation.

Members of the PCRTA executive board include President Chris DeMarco; Vice President Helena Parry; Recording Secretary Carole Stokes; Corresponding Secretary Denise Craig; Treasurer Dave Gynn; and Assistant Treasurer Darlene Fetterhoff. Committee chairs are the following members: Archival, Pat Gynn; Community Services, Judy Morgan; Informative/Protective Services, Kay Wise; Legislative, Dan McCombs; Luncheon Reservations, Karen Balog; Membership, Judy Hendershot; Memorial, Connie Evans and Karen Balog; Newsletter, Helena Parry; Nominations, Jan Fenci; Public Relations, position vacant; Scholarship, Jim Montaquila; Social/Travel, John and Sandy Kerstetter; Sunshine, Linda Roberts; Audit/Grants, Ron Snowberger; and New Member Caller, Adele Fussner.

Bi-monthly meetings, catered by Guido's of Ravenna, are held at the American Legion Post on Mogadore Road in Kent. Information about PCRTA can be found on the website www.pcrtanet.net.

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CONSTITUTIONAL
RIGHT."**

Claudette Colvin



KO-10721453